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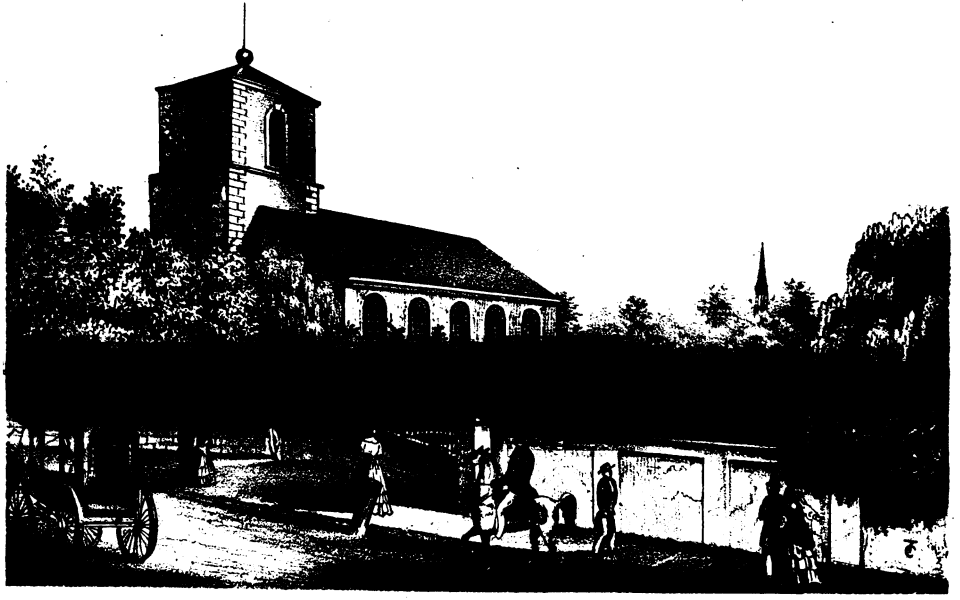

W. Keenan Lith.

OLD UNITARIAN CHURCH

CHARLESTON, S. C.

FAREWELL TO THE OLD CHURCH.

The Old and the New:

OR,

DISCOURSES AND PROCEEDINGS

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THE

RE-MODELLED UNITARIAN CHURCH

IN CHARLESTON, S. C.

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 1854.

PRECEDED BY

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE OLD CHURCH,

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1852.

[WITH ENGRAVINGS OF THE FORMER AND PRESENT EDIFICES.]

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FAREWELL TO THE OLD CHURCH:

A Historical Discourse,

DELIVERED IN

THE UNITARIAN CHURCH, IN ARCHDALE-STREET,

CHARLESTON, S. C.

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1852.

BY

SAMUEL GILMAN, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

FAREWELL DISCOURSE.

2 COR. CHAP. 5 : VS. 17.

"Old things are passed away."

YES, such is the inevitable decree. That which was once fresh, young, and new, sinks slowly and surely into mouldering decay. Although nature itself is endued with some principle of everlasting vigor, yet the *productions* of nature all seem to be subject to this great law of eternal variation and change. The mineral which we consume on our winter's hearth, is but the relic of primeval forests, which once flourished in beauty and grandeur, perhaps for a thousand years. Every possible form of organization grows, flourishes, declines, dies. It seems as if the mighty, intelligent Source of life, who sits behind the veil, had declared to the material things he has created, "Ye may reveal and speak for a little while my existence, my wisdom, my power, my goodness, my beauty, my love—but ye shall not partake of mine eternal and unchanging essence." Man, as an organized being, constitutes no exception to this universal law. There is found to be an old age, decay, and extinction, even in nations and races of men, as well as in individuals. The works of man follow the same inflexible rule. There is observed many a loose and crumbling spot in the pyramids of Egypt themselves. Human institutions also grow old and pass away. Empires break and scatter like that planet, whose many fragments are wandering in every

quarter of the solar system. Ecclesiastical dominion, which once monopolized all spiritual obedience, and bound and ground the human soul for many a century, at length releases its hold, and becomes only the shell and symbol of its former omnipotence. What wonder, then, my friends, if we find ourselves assembled here this day, to realize the truth of our impressive text, and to commemorate the grand law of decaying existence, by bidding farewell to this ancient structure that surrounds us? Notwithstanding our attachment to its present configuration; notwithstanding that many of us have often declared that every brick and fragment of it is precious to our hearts; notwithstanding that the thought of separating from numerous old and endearing visible associations here, has darkened many an eye, and saddened many a spirit among us; yet the moment has at length arrived, when we worship for the last time amidst these hallowed and venerable accommodations. We all feel the necessity of the change. The crumbling cornices threatened our lives from without. Increased economy of space was demanded for worshippers within. The very spirit of the age urged upon us a reconstruction of a more impressive and imposing character—we felt ashamed that our houses, and equipages, and banks, and civic halls, should throw the church of our God into the shade—and therefore, with willing yet pensive hearts, we are going to retire awhile from this consecrated scene, and as we look back upon it with a good deal of melancholy regret, we are sustained by the unavoidable conviction, that *old things* MUST *pass away.*

It may be an exercise of pleasing and profitable interest, on the present occasion, to dwell on such particulars connected with the history of this edifice, as the scantiness of records, the dimness of tradition, and the limits of our time, will admit. The history of a building like this is of little account as a mere study of curious anti-

quarianism—but so far as it is a history of principle—a history of religious faith and progress—a history of human feelings and human conscientious endeavors and struggles—a history of our venerated predecessors, who led the way to our present spiritual privileges and advantages—it is surely not unworthy of our attention in this Christian service, and it may awaken within us many emotions harmonizing with the tender, expansive, and reverent spirit of the gospel. *We have heard with our ears, O God*, says the inspired psalmist, *our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.* And our blessed Saviour himself so far permitted his feelings to be engaged by an outward material structure, that he not only would not permit the temple of his country and of his ancestors to be desecrated, but lamented, in the sublime and pathetic strains of prophecy, over its approaching demolition.

This edifice itself, being the first and only church that occupied the spot, has been standing less than eighty years; but its fortunes were once so intimately connected with those of another more ancient church in the city, of which it was an immediate branch, that it is impossible to dissever the history of the two from each other. For a considerable period, those who worshipped here, and those who worshipped in the old Congregational meeting-house, which stood on the spot now occupied by the Circular Church, in Meeting-street, formed in fact but one corporation and one congregation. So that we have to ascend higher than eighty years to trace our origin as a body of Christian worshippers, directly connected with these walls. Charleston itself was settled in the year 1680. Before ten years had passed away, and only a single Episcopal church had been established, a number of persons united together and founded a new ecclesiastical body, consisting, in part, of Presbyterians, chiefly

from Scotland and Ireland; partly of Congregationalists, from Old and New England; and partly of French Protestants, who had been lately exiled from France by the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. That was the original germ of this church; and I sometimes fondly trust, that as it was composed of such different materials, who must necessarily have dispensed with a very strict exclusiveness, and exercised towards each other a spirit of compromise and comprehensive charity, the same liberal element has descended, in one form or other, through an hundred and fifty years, till it has found a complete realization and embodiment in our existing organization.

The first three ministers of the church, says Dr. Ramsay, in his history of the Congregational Church in Charleston, are supposed to have been Congregationalists, the next two were Presbyterians, the sixth was a Congregationalist. Their terms of incumbency were very short, averaging only five or six years for each. Their names were Pierpont, Adams, Cotton, Stobo, Livingston, and Basset. Unfortunately, the earliest church records were destroyed and lost in a violent hurricane, which occurred in the year 1713. The first regular act of the society, after its establishment, of which there is any extant memorial, took place in the year 1724. It consists of the invitation given to the Rev. Nathan Basset, their sixth minister, to settle among them. Mr. Basset, like him who addresses you, was an alumnus of Harvard College in New England. Not a little of sympathetic emotion was excited within me, on finding that his engagement here was owing to the church having applied to some Boston ministers to send them a suitable pastor—the very same thing having occurred about one hundred years later in this very church, when application was made to the Rev. President Kirkland, of Boston and Cambridge, for a pastor, and an arrangement was consequently proposed,

which fixed so decisively the destiny, the labors, and the happiness of my life. A friend,* who has sat longer in this house than any other worshipper, informs me that, in her earlier youth, she has heard an aged relative frequently speak in terms of affectionate remembrance of Mr. Basset, under whose ministry her youthful days had been passed.

The invitation to Mr. Basset just alluded to, was subscribed by forty-three persons, probably heads of families. On looking over their names, I find that nearly three quarters of them are entirely extinct from among our fellow-citizens at the present day, evincing the awful rapidity with which time and fate sweep away the vestiges of individuals and families into the deep of oblivion. About one quarter of the names, however, are such as have obtained more or less distinction in the history of Charleston and South-Carolina, and are still pronounced among us in the daily intercourse of life. Only one name occurs in this instrument, belonging to any members of our congregation now. But that name, Thomas Barksdale, there is not the slightest reason to doubt, was borne by the progenitor of two ladies, who are now, and have been, for many years, communing members of this church.†

"The original building used by the church in Meeting-street was only forty feet square, and must have been very slight; for as early as the year 1729, a subscription was opened for rebuilding it, as having, by long time," says the record, "gone to decay, and become very old and out of repair. This was subscribed by one hundred and four persons, who put down their names for different

* Miss Sarah Savage.

† One of these ladies, the venerable Mrs. Sabina Payne, has been summoned to her reward since the delivery of the present discourse. Her surviving sister, Miss Mary Barksdale, still preserves among us the name of one of Mr. Basset's fellow-worshippers.

sums, varying from £100 to £1 10s., and amounting, in the aggregate, to more than eight thousand pounds of the then existing currency." Thus we see, my friends, from our own recent experience,* compared with this interesting old record, that the drama of life repeats itself over and over, in successive generations, according as similar exigencies arise to call forth similar efforts. "The thing that hath been," says Solomon, "is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." Let us thank heaven, however, that the subscriptions of our good forefathers towards the remodelling of their church, were, in all probability, rendered with no greater alacrity, harmony, and good spirit, than their successors have exhibited in 1852, for the remodelling of theirs.

The building in Meeting-street being completed, and enlarged twenty-two and a half feet in length, and a base added to the steeple, forty-five of the pews, which were only forty-seven in number, were assigned, in 1732, to the subscribers, subject, like our own, to an annual assessment. The building in question, you will remember, occupied the present site of the Circular Church, and no doubt gave the name to *Meeting*-street, as the first St. Philip's Church furnished a title to *Church*-street. Many persons are now living, who well recollect the title of "the old White Meeting," borne before the erection of the Circular Church in 1804, by the building whose history we have been now detailing.

Dr. Ramsay exhibits a list of persons, who were the first occupiers of the pews in this renovated Meeting-street church. On comparing it with the list of persons who had subscribed the invitation to Mr. Basset only eight years previous, I find many remarkable variations.

* A very large subscription had been recently obtained for the remodelling of the church.

Only about half the names that had been attached to the invitation to Mr. Basset, belonged now to the occupiers of the new pews—a proof that, in the lapse of eight years, a large number must have been withdrawn by death or removal. No doubt the severity of the climate, at that early period, was fatal to the immigrant stranger. On the other hand, the list of the new pew-occupiers exhibits about twenty-five names not attached to the invitation, showing the flourishing condition of the colony, and the rising prosperity of the little church. On carefully examining both the lists to which I have been referring, and making due inquiry among our contemporaries, I feel very confident that at least five or six families, or heads of families, who are worshipping here to-day, are descended, either through paternal or maternal lines, from some of the forty-three persons who, in 1724, subscribed the invitation to Mr. Basset, together with some of the fifty-three who occupied pews and half pews in 1732.

Very soon after the period now alluded to, the church, in 1734, sustained a large diminution of its members, by the secession of all the strict Presbyterians. This was the origin of the present Scotch, or First Presbyterian Church, in Meeting-street. Nothing else, especially interesting, seems to have occurred until the commencement of the American Revolution. During the forty years comprising that interval, the church was served by seven different ministers, whose names were Parker, Smith, Edmonds, Hutson, Bennet, Thomas, and Tennent. One of them was sent from England, recommended by Dr. Watts. Another was a disciple of the celebrated Whitfield, and most of them formed highly respectable connexions in Charleston, and were the ancestors of numerous families at present existing. Whitfield himself visited this city in about the year 1745, and although a member of the Church of England, yet he was not permitted to preach in either of the Episcopal Churches, of which two had been now erected. Mr. Smith, at that time pastor of the

White Meeting House, whose descendants of his name still live in Charleston, invited him to his pulpit, and largely bestowed upon him his interest and patronage. The little church continued to flourish, and more than regained the loss it had sustained by the secession of the Presbyterians. So that, soon after the arrival from Connecticut, in 1772, of Mr. Tennent, the last of the above mentioned seven ministers, the project was started of erecting a separate edifice for the accommodation of the increasing number of worshippers. Such was the origin of the building in which we are now assembled, virtually* for the last time. Mr. Tennent, as we learn from the inscription† on the wall at my right hand, was principally instrumental in the erection of this building. But the disorders of the revolutionary period, and the premature decease of Mr. Tennent himself, prevented him from ever officiating here.

I am informed, by a member of our congregation, that the ground on which the building stands was given by a Mr. Thomas Lamboll, a parishioner of Mr. Tennent, and from whom the present Lamboll-street derived its name. Mr. Lamboll's name frequently occurs in Dr. Ramsay's history already quoted, but no mention is made in it of the gift of the land by him. The walls, the roof, and most of the pews, were completed a short time before the Revolution, which commenced in 1775. The pulpit, also, must have been then finished, for I learn from our friend and contemporary just alluded to, that Mrs. Thomas, the daughter of Mr. Lamboll, had it removed from the church, and conveyed to some place of security, until more peaceful times. It was then restored to its original position, where it remained until about twenty years ago. The

* By a vote of the corporation, in 1852, the *walls* of the church were to be retained in the construction of the new edifice.

† The marble tablet, containing this inscription to the memory of the Rev. Mr. Tennent, has been delivered to his descendants, at their request.

present pastor was ordained and for several years preached in it. But as it was small, inconvenient, and insecure, the ladies of the church, among other repairs which they procured for the building, caused to be erected the present rostrum, which has proved very commodious and acceptable.

The times of the Revolution were greatly disastrous, both to the two edifices and to the joint congregation who were intended to occupy them. Especial favor was shown by the British to the Episcopal Churches, and corresponding contempt and abuse lavished upon those which at that time bore the epithet of Dissenting. When the enemy evacuated Charleston, they left the shell of the venerable old White Meeting House, but nothing more. The pulpit and the pews had been taken down and destroyed, and the empty enclosure used first as an hospital for their sick, and afterwards as a store-house of provisions for the royal army. It remained without a settled minister for six years, and divine service was wholly discontinued in it for nearly half that period. During the bombardment of the city, the men were engaged night and day on the lines; and on Sabbath, while a few women and invalids were worshipping in the church, a bomb fell and exploded in the cemetery. The worshippers immediately dispersed, and assembled no more until happier times.

I have understood that the building in which we now are was occupied by the British as a barrack, some say as a stable. The fact seems very probable, though I have nowhere seen it recorded. There is no reason why the enemy should have acted more tenderly to this edifice than to the other. Even the rights of sepulture in the old White Meeting Church-yard were denied to the families of worshippers, who were in Charleston after its capitulation, in the character of prisoners of war.

Of the existing worshippers in the church, about thirty-eight heads of families had been exiled by the conquerors;

partly to St. Augustine, in 1780, and partly to Philadelphia, in 1781. The exiles in Philadelphia, by a noble and beautiful act of confidence, took provisional measures for re-organizing and supplying their church, whenever it should be emancipated—an event which they bravely anticipated. As soon as Charleston was evacuated, in 1782, those members who were on the spot, and had continued prisoners in the city, immediately devised measures for repairing their dilapidated place of worship in Meeting-street. A subscription was opened for raising a sum of money to defray the expense of repairing it; to this many of the inhabitants, though not particularly connected with the church, liberally contributed. The repairs, which cost six thousand dollars, were urged with so much expedition, that the renovated house was opened for divine service on the 11th of December, 1783, with an appropriate sermon by the recently arrived pastor, the Rev. William Hollinshead, from Philadelphia, who had been procured, I presume, through the influence of the Philadelphia exiles.

Peace being now established with Great Britain, and the affairs of our young country springing forward with an elastic vigor, the church in Meeting-street sympathized in the general prosperity, and as her stakes were strengthened, she found it necessary also to enlarge her cords. An increased demand for pews pointed out the propriety of opening a subscription for raising money to complete the unfinished shell of the new church in Archdale-street. This was accomplished, also, for about six thousand dollars, and it was opened for public worship by the Rev. Dr. Hollinshead, then sole pastor, on the 25th of October, 1787, a little more than sixty-five years ago. The self-same pews and galleries in which you are now sitting, with some slight modifications, must have belonged to the church at its original dedication in 1787. t my own entrance on the ministry here, more than thirty-

two years ago, there was a large vacant space through the centre of the church, forming a continuation of the space at the entrance of the south door. It was soon after filled up by the insertion of six new pews, considered among the most eligible in the house. On a line with the vacant space just alluded to, and on the north side of the building, there was, as I learn, a large pew devoted to strangers, occupying the space of two pews in that direction, but it had been modified before my connection with the church. The front gallery received its circular alteration on the introduction of the organ in 1825.

To return to our narrative. In 1788, the next year after the dedication of the building, the Rev. Isaac Stockton Keith was regularly settled as co-pastor. The worshippers in both houses, as before observed, formed but one corporate body, and they severally heard, or might hear, two distinct sermons, from two preachers, who preached alternately in each house the same sermon, both on the same day. Such was the rule adopted in a by-law of the two churches. There must have been an exceeding mutual attachment among the members of the two bodies, to institute so very complicated and intimate a union. I am not aware that there is an exactly similar example in the ecclesiastical history of our country. As some explanation of the circumstance, I have been assured by those whose traditionary memory extends far back, that most of the worshippers in the old White Meeting House regarded each other as one family, and were, in fact, extensively related by intermarriages. In other churches in the land, where the members colonize and build a new place of worship, they choose their own minister, and possess their own separate place of worship. But here were two assemblies, who had a common and undivided property in two ministers, and in the places where they officiated.

"By this arrangement," says Dr. Ramsay, "the labor of the ministers in preparing sermons was diminished one half, whilst the natural desire of variety was gratified in those hearers who steadily worshipped in the same house." Perhaps, however, these advantages might have been expected by all who were acquainted with human nature, to be more than counterbalanced by attendant inconveniences and perils.

The joint ministry of these two excellent and distinguished men, Hollinshead and Keith, continued more than twenty-five years. This was, no doubt, the palmy and culminating condition of the Independent Church in Charleston. The city was every year increasing in wealth, population, intelligence, and religious life. The overflowing numbers of the two congregations rendered it necessary to substitute for the ancient White Meeting House the present spacious Circular Church, which was completed in 1806. The joint corporation ascended to an eminence of importance, respectability, and commanding influence, unsurpassed by any other religious institution in the city.

But into the midst of this brilliant and expanding prosperity, roots of bitterness unhappily intruded, incidental, perhaps, to the position of the united congregations and their two co-pastors. If one of these pastors should happen to be milder and more affable in his manners than the other—if one, in his preaching, leaned more toward the terrors of the law, and the other more toward the bland and benignant invitations of the gospel—if one insisted rigorously on the exclusive and terrible exactions of Calvinism, and the other rather favored the more comprehensive and acceptable spirit of Arminianism—who does not see that personal predilections, party differences, and doctrinal divergences, must almost unavoidably arise from such a state of affairs? Accordingly these things, one is constrained to say and lament, did

actually exist, and eventually issued, as we shall presently see, in the rupture and separation of the two churches. A smothered flame of disunion and dissatisfaction, involving, as is well known, both pastors and people together, continued until the decease of the two former in 1813 and 1816. Nor, unhappily, did it subside under their successors, the Rev. Benjamin M. Palmer and the Rev. Anthony Forster; until, at last, the unavoidable crisis came, in consequence of Mr. Forster's embracing and preaching Unitarian views of Christianity. He had married the daughter of an eminent and excellent Unitarian* of North-Carolina, and wishing to convert his beloved father-in-law to Calvinism, he borrowed some of his books, in order to prepare a more thorough and convincing reply. But, to use his own language, the farther he read, the more he felt the ground to tremble beneath his feet, and he became a convert to the very doctrines he had intended to assail. Without, however, assuming the name of Unitarian, he was contented, during the two or three years that he continued in the ministry, to abandon in his preaching the peculiar tenets of so-called orthodoxy, since they seemed to him unsupported by the Bible, which was the great warrant and foundation of his office. He presented to his hearers those great, leading views of the Messiahship and religion of Jesus, which are common to all Christian denominations, and in which he felt confident lay the essential elements of salvation and of the Christian life. Even the great body of Unitarians in this country were, at that time, in a transition state. They had adopted no distinctive title; they had entered into no sort of organization; no lines of separation were yet assumed by them, and many even regarded such measures with aversion, deeming it their duty to proclaim and profess what they thought the exact truth

* The late Joseph Gales, Esq., of Raleigh, N. C.

of the gospel, without multiplying new sectarian names and distinctions. In this precise category Mr. Forster naturally found himself, whatever course he might have felt constrained by circumstances to adopt, had his life and health been spared.

The liberality, illumination, and attractiveness of his discourses, speedily won over to his side a large portion of the united congregations, among whom the seeds had been long preparing and ripening for some development of the kind. I shall not here enter into the particulars of that warm and bitter controversy, which agitated our predecessors of the past generation. I care not to rake open the slumbering ashes which the gentle hand of God hath strewn over the fires kindled by our fathers. Suffice it to say, that after long and agonizing contentions, during which one party endeavored, and nearly succeeded, at withdrawing both churches from the other, they at length unexpectedly arrived at a unanimous agreement for a mutual separation, the Calvinistic party taking the Circular, and the Unitarian the Archdale-street Church, although the Unitarians, at one meeting, were in the majority, and had the choice of the two buildings at their command. At the final separation, sixty-nine subscribers adhered to the congregation of the Circular Church, and seventy-five to that of Archdale-street.

The crisis called forth some very able and eloquent defences of religious liberty and liberal Christianity, from the late excellent Judge Lee and others, his coadjutors. Perhaps a result of this kind must have been sooner or later anticipated, by all who were acquainted with the constitution and history of the joint churches. In tracing that history downward, I find, in several of its formal documents and records, marks of a liberality of sentiment, which prove that the seeds of a precious fruitage lay for a long period in a fostering soil. So that I do not wonder that, in the fulness of time, the principles and sentiments

of a former restricted age should have at length expanded into what we regard as the genial system of Unitarian Christianity. Dr. Ramsay observes, that after the secession in 1734, of the Presbyterian portion of the then composite church, the Congregationalists who remained continued to call their pastors from both denominations indiscriminately, leaving them to associate with their brethren of either form of church government, or with neither, as they chose; but, as a matter of peace, prohibited them, in every case, from introducing their peculiar opinions, respecting ecclesiastical polity, into the church over which they were called to preside.

Again, in 1750, we find a rule adopted, allowing assistant-ministers to be balloted for by all the supporters of the church, as well as the communing members, which was a large advance towards liberality for those times, for the communing members have almost universally claimed and exercised the exclusive right of appointing to the sacred office. Again, in 1775, when some difficulties arose as to the plan of uniting the two churches together, we find the following resolutions unanimously passed at a meeting of the members and supporters:

"That this church has never adopted any one distinguishing name, platform or constitution, in a formal manner, nor declared of what denomination of dissenters it is, but suffered itself to be called Presbyterian, or Congregationalist, or Independent, sometimes by one of the names, sometimes by two of them, and at other times by all the three."

"We do not find," they continue, "that this church is either Presbyterian, Congregationalist, or Independent, but somewhat distinct and singular from them all." Again—"That the main thing this church has had in view since the year 1732, was not so much to define exactly the particular mode of their discipline, and to bind their hands up to any one stiff form, adopted either by

Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Independents, *as to be upon a broad dissenting bottom*, and to leave themselves as free as possible from all foreign shackles, that no moderate persons of either denomination might be afraid to join them."

And mark, particularly, the comprehensiveness of the following resolution:

"The constitution of this church is to have no absolute, invariable form, but to act upon the freest and most liberal principles, as occasion may serve, and edification direct."

Still further, the influence of the Rev. Mr. Tennent must have transmitted a spirit of independence and liberality to many of the succeeding members of his congregation. Besides being employed by the Legislature of South-Carolina, in company with William Henry Drayton, to travel through the State, and rouse the people to a sense of the wrongs inflicted by Great Britain, he was also a most ardent and devoted champion of religious liberty. His speech in the House of Assembly, in 1777, the year of his death, in favor of placing Dissenters on the same platform of religious privileges with Episcopalians, which they had not before enjoyed, is a splendid specimen of parliamentary logic and eloquence, worthy of a Burke or a Barré. "We contend," he says in it, "that no legislature under heaven has a right to interfere with the judgment and conscience of men in religious matters, if their opinions and practices do not injure the state." "I say," he afterwards continues, "it is out of my power to communicate to any man on earth, a right to dispose of my conscience, and to lay down for me what I shall believe and practise in religious matters. Our judgment and practice in religious matters, are not like our purse; we cannot resign them to any man or set of men on earth; and, therefore, no man or set of men on earth, either has, or can have, a right to bind us in religious matters."

The whole speech is replete with sentiments and arguments in this noble trumpet-tone, which was amply echoed during the crisis that brought on a separation between the two churches.

After that event, which took place in 1817, the Archdale-street corporation assumed the legal style and title of Second Independent or Congregational Church of Charleston, while the Circular Church continued to bear that of Independent or Congregational Church, although, with the ancient elasticity of its constitution, its ministers are permitted to belong to the Presbyterian denomination.

No doubt it was painful to many, to behold a building originally devoted to Calvinistic views, converted into a shrine, so far as regarded those peculiar tenets, of a very opposite character; and many were prevented by their prejudices from seeing that certain grand and comprehensive elements, common to Unitarianism and Calvinism alike, might still be inculcated under the new administration of the edifice, and exert a saving influence on the votaries within its walls. But the history of Christianity is full of such instances of benignant change. Numberless heathen temples in the Roman empire were converted into Christian basilicas and churches. Numberless Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches in England and Germany became centres of Protestantism. Very many Calvinistic churches in England, and especially in Geneva, the scene of Calvin's life and ministry, are at this moment Unitarian. Unless we banish the very idea of progressive improvement in religion, such results must inevitably obtain.

Scarcely had Mr. Forster collected together his devoted band of followers, in their now undivided and unmolested fold, consisting, as they did, of a fair proportion of the worth, the piety, and the respectability of the former united body, when he was attacked by a violent and withering disease. He labored for a year or two

longer within these walls with signal success, but was compelled, in 1818, to retire to North-Carolina, where he died in the year 1821. A volume of his discourses, preceded by an interesting biography of the author, was afterwards prepared by his friend, Martin Luther Hurlbut, who had been throughout one of the main supporters of Mr. Forster and his principles. An inspection of that whole volume will furnish the best key, the best explanation, and the best justification that can be desired, of Mr. Forster's entire position and success.

In the spring of 1819, I was summoned to preach as a candidate to succeed him. Having arrived here from Cambridge, in a land journey of eleven nights and days, the most rapid at that time feasible, I officiated four Sabbaths, and was unanimously elected pastor of the church. I came as an avowed Unitarian, and was expected to unfurl here the banner of Unitarian Christianity. A vacancy in the services of a few months then took place, and returning late in the fall of the same year, I was ordained on the first Sabbath in December, by the three following clergymen:—Rev. Joseph Tuckerman, afterwards so distinguished as the first Minister to the Poor in Boston; Rev. Mr. Sparks, now President of Harvard College; and Rev. Mr. Parks, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Saltketcher's, in South-Carolina, but himself, I believe, an Independent Congregationalist. The last named gentleman, after a long private examination of my sentiments, became satisfied that he could conscientiously participate in my ordination as a minister of the gospel, although we largely differed from each other in our speculative interpretations of scripture. For this act of liberality, the remaining brief portion of his life was embittered by the censures and coldness of many of his brethren in the ministry.

Few, comparatively, of my present hearers, can imagine the difficulties and trials encountered by the church

for many years after this event. A considerable number of persons very soon severed their connection with us, either because their adhesion had been merely one of personal friendship to Mr. Forster, or because they were dissatisfied with the services and the unfolded views of his successor—some expecting a looser and some a stricter system of doctrines—or because they could not brave the odium of bearing a new and unpopular name. A heavy incumbrance had been entailed on the society at their separation from the other congregation, in consequence of our assuming one-third of a large debt due by the joint churches—our portion amounting at least to nine thousand dollars, on which the interest was annually to be paid. This was still farther increased by obligations necessarily incident to the exchange of pastors, and to all the expenses arising from the existing circumstances of the church. The very name of Unitarian bore with it an offensive odor, in comparison with which its present unpopularity, which now and then annoys and surprises some of us, may be regarded as quite a decent and orthodox reputation. Bitter speeches, which I do not care to repeat or remember, were daily circulated against us with the activity of current coin. As a symptom of the state of things then existing, it may be remarked that a person who was employed to procure subscriptions among the congregation, for a Baltimore monthly periodical, entitled the Unitarian Miscellany and Christian Monitor, imagined that he would be more successful by erasing from his prospectus the name of Unitarian Miscellany, and retaining only that of Christian Monitor. Most persons preferred to call the church by its legal title of Second Independent, and seemed to shrink from the employment of the epithet Unitarian; nor was it until nearly the end of fifteen years, that the corporation, by applying to the legislature, exchanged the former for the present title. A favorite mode of depreciating and discouraging

us for many years, was, industriously to circulate the report that we were in a declining condition. Like all other congregations, we had our fluctuations in numbers, but I frequently heard of our declining and dying away, when the church was as flourishing as we could reasonably desire. Superadded to other difficulties and troubles, was a long and vexatious lawsuit with our former sister-church, in regard to the payment of the heavy debt already alluded to. At length, when the animosities of the old controversy began to subside, an amicable compromise was entered into, honorable, I believe, to both parties. Our main debt was liquidated, partly by disposing of a convenient avenue which led through the church-yard into King-street, and which I fondly hope may yet be recovered; partly by purchasing the premises south of the church, and converting a large portion of the whole grounds into those lots and squares, which so adorn and beautify our present cemetery, and which were sold to be the private property of individuals; and partly by a legacy of fifteen hundred dollars from the late Col. Thomas Roper, a distinguished Unitarian, who also left to the city the splendid bequest of the Roper Fund.

Subsequent exertions on the part of successive officers of the church, have long since liquidated every thing in the shape of debt, and our temporal concerns have, for several years, enjoyed that unincumbered condition, so encouraging to the enterprise now undertaken by the congregation. The times have been, I say it without flattery—for half the objects of it are now dead and gone—when I have looked with wonder at the steadfastness and perseverance of the congregation, in weathering so many storms of darkness, discouragement, opposition, and uncharitableness of every kind, both conscientious and unconscientious. There was often everything to overwhelm timid and sensitive minds, and yet timid and sensitive minds held on. For my own part, I felt all along a confi-

dent assurance, that there was a redeeming power in Unitarian Christianity, which, if allowed a full and fair field, and if honestly and earnestly inculcated, would at length be felt by many a heart to be the power of God unto salvation. That you, my beloved hearers, experience it to be so this day, there is sufficient warrant in these new sacrifices and exertions, which you have so cheerfully and heartily undertaken. But such, it ought in justice to be observed, has ever been the spirit of the congregation. They have never been appealed to in vain for any kind of laudable enterprise connected with the church, or for any charitable purposes. Although the original assessment on the pews was necessarily large, yet at an early period they submitted to an addition of ten or twenty per cent., which, I believe, has never been removed.

Soon after my introduction into the church, a Ladies' Working Society was established, which has, generally, averaged nearly a hundred members; and which, in various ways, has been of essential use to the pastor and the corporation. They have largely and repeatedly assisted in repairing the building—they have frequently supplied the desk for the relief of the pastor in his absence or sickness—and they have bestowed many considerable sums upon him, when straitened in his temporal circumstances. They are now engaged, it is understood, in providing, for the new edifice to be built, a rich and appropriate organ.

One other incident, of a personal nature, let me mention, partly from a feeling of gratitude, and partly to show the interest which has prevailed in whatever has been connected with this church. About ten years ago, when, by laboring as a teacher, I had nearly removed a long-standing incumbrance on my present residence, and my health began to fail, I received, from some anonymous friends, an enclosure containing one thousand dollars, with an earnest request that I would teach no more. The par-

ticular authors of this generous benefaction have never been known, nor scarcely even suspected by its object.

A few desultory notices of various kinds may now be appropriate to the occasion; in which you will indulge me, my friends, in a sort of free and family talk, before finally relieving your patient attention.

For about twenty years I conducted the religious education of the children, chiefly alone, by the use of catechisms and other elementary books, a large class of young ladies being taught by another. The number of pupils generally averaged between forty and fifty. Several ladies and gentlemen then took the labor from my hands, conducted by a kind and able superintendent, who organized the Sabbath School. He was succeeded by another, who filled the place with characteristic energy for a few years, until his removal to a distant city, where he takes, as we all well know, just as vivid, efficient and substantial an interest in our church, as if he were present with us in the body. To him succeeded the present superintendent, and the services are all that the most pious and affectionate parents could wish them.

During my connection with you, I have endeavored to carry into execution various plans, which seemed to me improvements, some of which have succeeded, and others failed. I attempted once to introduce the practice of administering the Lord's Supper in presence of the whole congregation, but it proved so unacceptable that I desisted from pressing it. At the beginning of my ministry, I found that candidates for the Lord's Supper could only be admitted by a majority of votes among the communicants. This regulation was, ere long, removed, and now the access to the table of the Lord is as free to every beiever, as his faith, his conscience, and the Spirit of his God working within him, may choose to make it. I have several times tried courses of evening lectures, in order to expound and defend our peculiar tenets, but the con-

servative habits of our people and the lack of interest in the public, caused such occasions so soon to languish, that I was induced to desist. Nearly ten years ago, I attempted a plan, brought forward in a report by the acting chairman of the corporation, which I hoped would prove satisfactory to all parties, and be eminently beneficial to the church. It was, to have morning and candle-light services for adults, and an afternoon service for children, in the Sunday School. But at length ascertaining, by a strict personal canvass among the congregation, that about three-quarters of them preferred the old arrangement of morning and afternoon services, I returned to it at the end of one year. I still respectfully think that the attempted scheme, if it could succeed, would essentially contribute to the prosperity of the church, and involve, on the whole, more general benefits than evils; and I trust that, with the new edifice, it may again be undertaken, unless emphatically opposed. But if many of the congregation should be still found to absent themselves from the candle-light service, it would again be desirable to return to the time-honored morning and afternoon worship.

A few years since, I commenced a weekly meeting, for prayer and conference, at my own house; but owing, probably, to some deficiency in the conductor, it soon languished and died out. A similar attempt at Friday evening lectures, in the church, met with similar poor success, after being persevered in for about two years.

At the beginning of my ministry, and, as I understand, for all preceding time, in this place, the services of the choir were conducted only by gentlemen. After a few years, one rich female voice, now departed from the earth, lent its aid for a while; and some years after the erection, in 1825, of the organ, which was purchased by a general subscription, a company of female singers joined the choir, and that gratifying department of the service,

aided occasionally by eminent female singers, has been continued, with few intermissions, to the present time. A public acknowledgment is due to our acting chorister, for his extra-official and untiring services in teaching the young ladies, and a word of kind remembrance to his predecessor, whose services commenced in the time of Mr. Forster, and who declined other more lucrative proffered engagements, and who, I pray, may long continue to worship at the spot around which his affections, convictions, and old sacred remembrances still cling.

In our organists, we have always been fortunate. Many of us still remember the reputation of the two Coopers, brothers, laboring under the fatal disease of consumption, but whose skilful and delicate handling attracted multitudes to the church, some of whom, perhaps, afterwards remained to worship. The Coopers were the first organists. We had, for a few years, an amateur incumbent in an aged gentleman of revolutionary memory, by the name of Stevens, and another, in an obliging lady of the congregation.

Besides the Ladies' Society, before mentioned, we have in the church a Book and Tract Society, which has always been a favorite in the congregation, and numbers at present about eighty members. We have also a flourishing and devoted female Bible Class, assembling every Friday afternoon. Soon after Mr. Forster's death, a number of gentlemen among us subscribed a handsome sum and purchased, from his widow, the admirable theological library which had been collected by her husband. They presented it to the church, and it has stood many years in the apartment behind the organ, and open to the use of the worshippers. It contains many excellent books, which could not now be well procured elsewhere.

Our communion table, of costly inlaid work, was presented by Mr. James C. Courtenay, a gentleman of uncommon moral and scientific promise, who died in 1835,

and whose excellent mother still survives, as the oldest member but two in the congregation, but whose infirmities disable her from attending divine worship. On her eightieth anniversary, three years ago, I had the pleasure of conducting a commemorative religious service at her own house. With the venerable forms of the two *oldest* worshippers* in the church, nearly of the same age, who sit at my left hand, we are all well familiar. Long may they continue to worship at a spot from which no pelting storms and no burning suns could ever avail to keep away their punctual footsteps, any more than in former times they could divert the one from steering his bark to its desired haven, or the other from attending to the arduous duties of life.

The clock was a present from Mr. Benj. J. Howland.

The Bible used in the pulpit was presented by Mrs. Eliza Cochrane, formerly a worshipper here.

On my first connection with the church, I found Watts's Psalms and Hymns employed in the service. But so many of them were entirely inconsistent with the professed doctrines of the church, and so many others exceptionable on other accounts, that in a year or two they were replaced by the original edition of our present excellent [New-York] Collection. As another instance, however, of the difficulties under which we at that time labored, this simple exchange of hymn-books caused one large family to retire from the church, although they had hitherto been among the most devoted adherents to the new order of things.

The appearance of this building, on my earliest connection with it, was that of a plain brick structure. It has been twice covered with plaster, and two or three times subjected to large and costly repairs. On these and other occasions of suspended service, we have been accommodated by the South-Carolina Society twice, by

* Capt. Morgan and Mr. Philip Moore.

the German Lutheran Church, by the Commissioners of the Orphan House, and by Mr. Allston, the proprietor of a vacant building in Cannonsborough. At a fair given by the ladies to meet the expenses of one of these large repairs, a curious and beautiful *model* of the building, in shell work, was exposed for sale, and purchased by a number of young persons, who presented it to their pastor. It has ever since occupied a conspicuous position in his library, awakening many associations of tenderness, reverence, and duty, and it will henceforth be doubly precious to him, when the venerated original shall have been transformed into new and loftier proportions.

Our present congregation I do not think much larger than that which welcomed me to the ministry. The additions which have been made to the lower floor do not more than counterbalance the losses sustained in the galleries, which at that time were not an unfavorite place of sitting. The changes arising from removals from the city, in our fluctuating population, and from other causes, are almost incredible. By a calculation which I made a few years ago, I have no doubt that families sufficient to fill the building three times over, have been in various ways withdrawn from it, since my introduction here. Previous to the great fire and pestilence in 1838, a plan was in contemplation, by some respectable parties, to establish a new Unitarian Society in another part of the city, which should employ a written Liturgy in its worship. But the events of that disastrous year rendered it abortive. There has always been, in the congregation, too decided a spirit of harmony and compromise to effect an increase of churches by violent separation, which is so often the occasion of ecclesiastical colonization.

I have officiated at exactly three hundred funerals of persons connected with this church, or have recorded their deaths. This I consider as comparatively a remarkable exemption from mortality. It amounts

only to nine in each year, and as the congregation has generally averaged about four hundred souls, the proportion of deaths is only one in forty-four persons. This proportion is unusually small—and I would seriously propose it as a subject in moral and physical statistics, worth examination and inquiry, whether, all other things being equal, calm and moderate views of religion do not decidedly contribute to health and longevity.

I have administered the ordinance of Christian baptism to five hundred and twenty-one persons, of whom thirty-seven were adults. I have celebrated one hundred and forty-eight marriages, equal only to half the number of deaths recorded, which, I believe, is another unusual proportion, and another verification of the smallness of mortality among us. During my ministry, two hundred and thirty-two white persons have united in celebrating the communion, in addition to thirty-three who were communicants at the beginning. Of the whole two hundred and sixty-five, about one hundred and ten still remain. Owing to the absence of efficient leaders, the colored portion of the communicants has generally been in a state of decline, in spite of my constant and earnest efforts to prevent it.

With the clergymen of this city, although not on terms of ecclesiastical interchange, it has ever been my good fortune to hold the most friendly relations. During a long season of illness, and absence from my charge, the pulpit was kindly supplied, in succession, by nearly twenty ministers.

But it is time to cease lingering any longer on these hallowed reminiscences. The hour has come, when we must bid adieu to the irrevocable past, and tread forward on the eventful future. Let us do it with the confidence, the hope, the perseverance, the mutual harmony, of which we find such abundant traces in these records of bye-gone times. We must not conceal from ourselves that we

have a great work before us. Difficulties, but not impossibilities, roughen our prospective horizon. The Rubicon is passed. Our plans are marked out. We see and know what must be done. All parties must now repose a mutual confidence in each other, and advance shoulder to shoulder. It is too late to criticise, and to say, this or that scheme might have better succeeded. Every opportunity for such suggestions has been amply furnished. Every formal, legal, careful, deliberate step has been taken. The committees who have the management of the new enterprise in charge, possess the same interest in it with the rest of the congregation. They have every motive with the rest to guard against extravagance, to procure and husband all necessary means, to avoid the extremes of over-confidence and despondency, and to push forward the work to a seasonable and satisfactory completion.

In the mean time, let us remember that the intervening period may possibly be somewhat critical for the general interests of our society. We can expect to do little more than hold steadfastly together. We shall be wanderers and temporary sojourners in other precincts. All the fixed and sacred associations of place and circumstance, must, for a while, be relinquished, and we must push our little vessel from the shore to float at will, until all things are prepared for her to enter again into her ancient but renovated moorings. May that moment find us all re-assembling together, with our wonted union, hopefulness, mutual trust, and enjoyment of the benignant favor of a kind and gracious God.

Farewell, then, for a while, ye beloved and venerated walls, that have accommodated and sheltered the devotions of three successive generations! Farewell, for a while, thou lovely cemetery, whose flower-crowned graves reminded us every Sabbath of departed connexions and of our own solemn awaiting destiny. Farewell,

forever, these simple and modest architectural adornments around us, that have witnessed our own and our fathers' prayers—have so often seen the waters of baptism call down a blessing on the infant's head—beheld so many tender and heart-searching communion seasons—and looked down as with a silent approval and blessing on our consecrated, thoughtful hours. Farewell, thou beautiful organ, already departed from the spot, whose tones have so often soothed our care-worn hearts, composed our reflections, and assisted in lifting our grateful, aspiring thoughts to heaven. Farewell, those antique pews, where have sat so many inquiring listeners, and where mine eyes have met the eyes both of the living and the now dead, beaming with candor, attention, and a teachable and loving spirit, that have awakened my trembling sense of responsibility, and summoned me to exert the utmost powers of my being. Farewell, thou honored and hallowed pulpit—the scene of my early and later years—from which I have offered the prayers of a sympathizing congregation—where I have endeavored to proclaim the truth with fulness and honesty—to interpret the Bible aright, to unfold the character of God, to draw men back to His arms, to search and detect the windings of the human heart, to promulgate a system of pure Christian morality, to enforce the awful sanctions, the waiting retributions of eternity, to develop the fathomless perfections of the Saviour's character, the beauty of the Saviour's love, and thus to mould myself and my fellow-beings into a heavenly unity, even as He and his Father are one!

But to revert, my friends, for one moment, to the great teaching of our text. We will remember, for our consolation, and as a steadfast foundation for our souls to rest upon, that there are some happy *exceptions* to the general truth that *old things pass away*. Just as we see that these solid walls about us are going to remain, to serve as the

substructure for a higher and more beautiful architectural life—so there are certain grand verities—certain unchangeable essences—certain eternal relations and personalties, around which new forms of being, of happiness, of progress, and of glory, shall rise and flourish forever. The Deity himself—the immortal soul of man—the religion and the institutions of Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever—the behests and tendencies of duty and of virtue—and the uncurtained realities of the promised heavenly world—these, these, with advancing time, shall only gather fresh vigor and lustre—these, however long they may exist, will still remain forever young, and shall never, never, pass away!

Jones & Lee, Arch^ts W. Keenan Lith

NEW UNITARIAN CHURCH

CHARLESTON, S. C.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING.

It is deemed appropriate to precede the recorded Exercises at the Dedication of the new church, with some description of the edifice itself. For this purpose, the following details are extracted from the Charleston Courier, issued on the morning succeeding the ceremonies:

The weather yesterday was most auspiciously pleasant and inviting, so that the interesting exercises connected with the consecration and formal appropriation of the new house, lately completed for the Unitarian congregation on Archdale-street, were enjoyed by a large concourse of visitors, in addition to those who have habitually worshipped in the venerable old building, which was adopted as the basis of the present elegant and commodious edifice.

The old building, so well known for its quaint and sombre appearance, furnished the basis for the present structure. This retention, as far as possible, of the old structure, was due to a natural regard and respect for time-honored associations, rather than to any considerations of mere economy, for the cost of an entirely new edifice would scarcely have exceeded the repairs introduced and perfected, augmented as these have been by the difficulties surmounted in perforating the faithful old masonry to admit the new and lofty windows, and of compassing the ancient massive tower to build one far more lofty and imposing. The original structure was also nearly a square, and was accordingly not well adapted to the Gothic style, which was preferred by the building committee of the congregation. A regard to full accommodations also rendered it necessary to retain the side galleries, an appendage which is rarely found in Gothic edifices, and which it is difficult to reconcile with the purity and harmony of that order.

These facts presented difficulties which nothing short of the taste,

ingenuity, and skill, so often displayed before by our young and enterprising architects, Messrs. Jones & Lee, could have surmounted, and their success, under the circumstances, adds another trophy to their rich professional achievements.

The style adopted is "Perpendicular," the latest and richest of all the styles of Gothic architecture.

The most remarkable feature in the exterior of the building is the tower, through the base of which is the principal entrance to the church. The form of it is square, with eight buttresses rising in successive stages, panelled and surmouuted with pinnacles richly crotcheted. Over the tower entrance is a spacious window, opening on the organ loft, the head of which is filled with elaborate tracery, in which is set the richest stained glass. Above this window, in the third stage of the tower, are four square tower lights, filled with richly cusped tracery work. Above these are four pointed windows with decorated heads. All the windows are finished with moulded hoods; that over the doorway is elaborately crotcheted. The summit of the tower is embattled; every portion is here filled with cusped panels, which give it an exceedingly rich appearance. At the four angles of the summit rise lofty pinnacles crowned with enriched crotchets and finials; each finial bears a vane in the shape of a pennant, a form frequently used in English churches of this period.

The exterior of the body of the church is finished in conformity with the tower; buttresses rise in three stages between the windows, and are all surmounted with richly crotcheted pinnacles. The windows, too, are all filled with elaborately carved tracery, and are set with the finest stained glass. The great window in the rear of the church is in the richest style of design and finish, and is filled with figures of emblematic character.

The most striking feature of the interior is the ceiling of the nave, being, it is believed, the only work of its kind in this country. It is of that peculiar Gothic work styled "fan tracery;" the delicate enrichments, the almost numberless arches intersecting each other in every direction, the gracefully falling pendants, all filled with the richest tracery, give to the whole an exceeding gorgeous appearance, not easily appreciated by description. The groins of the ceiling are supported by shafts attached to the massive columns which rise from the floor to the ceiling. Between these columns are flat arches,

the spandrels of which are filled with cusped work, surmounted by a light cast iron railing of appropriate design—this rail forms the gallery front.

An addition has been made to the rear of the church for a pulpit recess. A lofty archway opens into it, the splayed jambs of which are filled with Gothic tracery. In the rear of this recess is the great east window above described. The ceiling over this portion of the church is in the richest style of "fan tracery," with one central pendant.

An arch, nearly similar to that over the pulpit, opens over the organ loft; here a new and valuable organ, now being built, similar in style to the building, will soon be placed. Beneath the organ gallery a handsomely carved screen work separates the body of the church from the entrance in the base of the tower. The last is paved with encaustic tiles of the most appropriate pattern.

The furniture of the church is all in conformity with the finish. The pulpit is in solid walnut of the richest design; the pews, gallery, rail, &c., are capped with the same wood. The pews will present all the modern advantages and improvements. The whole church is lit with gas. The interior is finished throughout in imitation of stone.

In brief, we but repeat the opinions of competent judges, when we pronounce the new Unitarian Church one of the architectural ornaments of our city, and a monument of the taste and skill of its designers.

ORDER OF EXERCISES

AT THE

DEDICATION

OF THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH, CHARLESTON, S. C.

SUNDAY, APRIL 2d, 1854.

[*The Dedicatory Exercises were continued through the three services of the day.*]

MORNING SERVICE.

INTRODUCTORY ANTHEM.

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER,

BY REV. JOHN PIERPONT, JR.,

OF SAVANNAH.

SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE,

BY REV. C. J. BOWEN,

OF NEW-BEDFORD.

HYMN.

And will the great eternal God
On earth establish his abode?
And will he from his radiant throne,
Regard our temples as his own?

These walls we to thy honor raise;
Long may they echo to thy praise;
And thou, descending, fill the place
With choicest blessings of thy grace.

And in the great decisive day,
When God the nations shall survey,
May it before the world appear,
That crowds were born to glory, here. *Doddridge.*

SERMON OF DEDICATION,

BY REV. S. GILMAN, D.D.

HYMN.

Greatest of beings! Source of good!
We bow before thy throne,
Which from eternity hath stood,
And worship thee alone.

Wilt thou vouchsafe thy presence here,
And shed propitious rays,
While with united hands we rear
An altar to thy praise?

Here may the mind, while sunk in woes,
And comfort long delays,
On Mercy's gentle breast repose,
And change its sighs for praise.

While life eternal all pursue,
Here may the way be shown,
To know thyself, God only true,
And Christ, thy chosen Son. *Phil. Select.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION,

BY REV. G. W. BURNAP, D. D.,

OF BALTIMORE.

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CHURCH,

BY REV. C. M. TAGGART.

DOXOLOGY.

Praise to thee, thou great Creator,
Praise to thee from every tongue;
Join, my soul, with every creature,
Join the universal song.

For ten thousand blessings given,
For the hope of future joy,
Sound his praise through earth and heaven,
Sound Jehovah's praise on high. *Fawcett.*

BENEDICTION.

AFTERNOON SERVICE.

ANTHEM.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy infirmities. Who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness. O praise the Lord, ye angels of his, ye that excel in strength, ye that fulfil his commandment, and hearken unto the voice of his word. O praise the Lord, all ye his hosts, ye servants of his that do his pleasure. O speak good of the Lord, all ye works of his, in all places of his dominion; praise thou the Lord, O my soul. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, through Jesus Christ, forever and ever.—Amen.

PRAYER,

BY REV. MR. TAGGART.

SALUTATION OF THE CHURCHES,

BY REV. MR. PIERPONT.

HYMN.

Great God, the followers of thy Son,
  We bow before thy mercy seat,
To worship thee, the holy one,
  And pour our wishes at thy feet.

O grant thy blessing here to-day!
  O give thy people joy and peace!
The tokens of thy love display,
  And favor, that shall never cease.

We seek the truth which Jesus brought;
  His path of light we long to tread;
Here be his holy doctrines taught,
  And here, their purest influence shed.

May faith, and hope, and love abound;
  Our sins and errors be forgiven;
And we, in thy great day, be found
  Children of God and heirs of heaven.

SERMON,

BY REV. JOHN H. HEYWOOD,

OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

HYMN.

On thy church, O power divine!
Cause thy glorious face to shine,
Till the nations from afar
Hail her as their guiding star;
Till her sons, from zone to zone,
Make thy great salvation known.

Then shall God, with lavish hand,
Scatter blessings o'er the land;
Earth shall yield her rich increase,
Every breeze shall whisper peace,

And the world's remotest bound
With the voice of praise resound.

Spirit of the Psalms.

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

BY REV. DR. GILMAN.

THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

ANTHEM.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.

Not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ being risen from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

EXHORTATION,

BY REV. MR. PIERPONT.

PRAYER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE BREAD,

BY REV. DR. BURNAP.

PRAYER AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE WINE,

BY REV. MR. BOWEN.

HYMN.

In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me,
Hopes deceive and fears annoy;
Never shall the cross forsake me;
Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming
Light and love upon my way,
From the cross the radiance streaming
Adds more lustre to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
By the cross are sanctified;
Peace is there that knows no measure,
Joys that through all time abide. *Bowring.*

BENEDICTION.

EVENING SERVICE.

ANTHEM.

O let the joyful tidings fill the whole creation,
Heirs of redeeming mercy, spread the news around,
Jesus, Immanuel, shall rule o'er every nation,
Far as the guilty race of man is found.
Now while the night of ages fills the world with sadness,
Now while the Prince of Darkness rages in his madness,
O sun of righteousness, thy cheering beams display,
Dawn on the earth, and bring the glorious day.

Deep is the desolation of the race benighted,
Fast bound in ignorance, o'erwhelmed with guilt and fear,
Folly and superstition every hope have blighted,
Save when the rays of truth divine appear;
Haste, haste, ye messengers, reveal the wondrous story,
Tell of the cross, and the coming tide of glory.
Then, sun of righteousness, thy cheering beams display,
Dawn on the earth, and bring the glorious day.

PRAYER,

BY REV. MR. HEYWOOD.

HYMN.

All-seeing God! 'tis thine to know
The springs whence wrong opinions flow;
To judge, from principles within,
When frailty errs, and when we sin.

Who among men, great Lord of all!
Thy servant to his bar shall call;
Judge him, for modes of faith, thy foe,
And doom him to the realms of woe?

Who with another's eye can read,
Or worship by another's creed?
Trusting thy grace, we form our own,
And bow to thy commands alone.

If wrong, correct; accept, if right;
While faithful we improve our light;
Condemning none, but zealous still
To learn and follow all thy will. *Scott.*

SERMON,

BY REV. DR. BURNAP.

HYMN.

Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed
His tender last farewell,
A guide, a comforter bequeathed
With us to dwell.

He came in tongues of living flame,
To teach, convince, subdue;
All-powerful as the wind he came,
As viewless too.

And every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are his alone.

He came sweet influence to impart,
A gracious willing guest,
While he can find one humble heart,
Wherein to rest.

And his that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of heaven.

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness pitying see;
O make our hearts thy dwelling place,
And worthier thee! *Spirit of the Psaln*

CONCLUDING ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE,

BY REV. MR. BOWEN.

CLOSING PRAYER,

BY REV. DR. GILMAN.

HYMN.

Lord! dismiss us with thy blessing,
Hope and comfort from above;
Let us each, thy peace possessing,
Triumph in redeeming love:
Still support us
While in duty's path we move.

Thanks we give, and adoration,
For thy gospel's joyful sound;
May the fruits of thy salvation
In our hearts and lives abound:
May thy presence
With us evermore be found. *Toplady's Coll.*

BENEDICTION.

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

THE DEDICATION

OF THE REMODELLED

UNITARIAN CHURCH,

IN CHARLESTON, S. C.

ON SUNDAY, APRIL 2, 1854

BY

SAMUEL GILMAN, D.D.

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

SERMON OF DEDICATION.

PSALM XCVI.: 9.

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."

ALSO, JOHN IV.: 23.

"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship THE FATHER, *in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

WELCOME, once more, ye venerable walls! Welcome, ye fair and exquisite adornments! Two years have rolled slowly and wearily away, since we departed from your time-honored precincts, and sought a place for our wandering altar, wherever convenience or kindness conducted us to a shelter. We have adhered closely together, like brethren of one common faith and one common hope. While dissevered from the binding associations of a consecrated and long-visited locality, we have tried and tested the strength of our religious principles and religious habits. Amidst some dark providences and some discouraging obstacles, we have been enabled to maintain uninterrupted our weekly services, with the exception of a brief season, and were even then accommodated by the courtesy of a neighboring church. We may not so have improved this large and substantive portion of our mortal life as to satisfy our consciences, or correspond to our inestimable privileges. We are consciously still far, too far, from that distant, yet beckoning and alluring stan-

dard of perfection, which shines upon our yearning vision from the gospel of the Saviour. But, assuredly, our interest in the great spiritual purport and topics of that religion has not declined, but has rather meanwhile increased. We wish to probe it deeper, and to know it more. We wish more thoroughly to mould its transforming and saving influences into our frail hearts, into our busy, care-worn, fleeting and unprofitable lives. And, therefore, have we again resorted, on this long desired day, to our old beloved church, which, during the interval, we have laboriously renovated, enlarged, and beautified. We come, thank God, in unbroken ranks and undiminished numbers, notwithstanding the varied contingencies which, in the course of two years, must happen to every religious society in our position; and notwithstanding we mourn the extraordinary number of twenty fellow-members, of all ages, removed from our earthly sight. The expenditures for these repairs might be truly deemed extravagant, if nothing but our vanity and æsthetic taste prompted the sacrifice; but we rightly estimate them at an insignificant price, when compared with the unspeakable value of our religious faith and principles. We regret not the cost of any alabaster-box of precious ointment, which we are permitted to pour on the Saviour's honored head. We are, indeed, glad, at the invitation of the melodious psalmist in our text, to come and worship the Lord in all this external array and beauty of symmetry and holiness; but we would not care to come even here, except under the guidance and promptings of *his* words, who proclaimed the dawning hour of that glorious period, when THE FATHER should be worshipped in spirit and in truth; for we learn, with a solemn joy, that the Father SEEKETH such to worship him.

It may be an appropriate employment of the present interesting occasion, to investigate both the general and special grounds which actuate, or certainly *ought* to ac-

tuate us, as we this day commence anew a fixed order of religious worship in our revisited sanctuary. Such an investigation may tend to stir afresh the deepest principles of our being—impress upon us a kindling sense of the widest and most solemn relations we sustain—and stimulate us to those practical issues, which involve our most imperative duties. Aid us, oh Spirit of Truth, of Light, and of Love, in these our earnest researches, so that the result may promote thy purposes and glory, through Jesus Christ thy Son!

Why, then, do we re-appear in these courts to-day? I answer, first, because we would gratify and develop one of the strongest impulses and loftiest instincts inherent in the moral constitution of man. There can be no complete definition of man, unless you include in it his religious capacities and tendencies. When the infinite Spirit projected our finite spirits from the brooding and creative depths of his own being, he seems to have retained us in connection with himself, by a mysterious and vital thread, which evermore draws us back to a fond communion with our adorable original. No surer does the power of gravitation impel man's body to the central mass, than a native, reverent appetency, carries his soul towards an unseen, intelligent Cause. Such is the tendency stamped on his very nature; such is the mould and form, without which he never began to be. If, so long as he is what is, he must breathe, see, feel, think, remember, or hope—in like manner, so long as he is what he is, he must expend some of his conscious energies in aiming at an intercourse, more or less enlightened, with the Author of his existence. It is true that these sacred and mighty instincts in our nature may be thwarted, perverted, smothered, paralyzed, and apparently suspended, by certain exceptional peculiarities, by the force of counteracting circumstances, or by the blighting developments of corruption and sin. Yet, still, nothing can absolutely eradi-

cate or destroy them. There they lie, embedded in the interior recesses of our being. They were there long before one word of the Bible was written, or revelation had uttered and miraculously enforced a single truth or command, or voice of living preacher had summoned the sinner to repentance; for Bible, Revelation and Preacher were never given—as some seem to entertain a vague and mysterious persuasion—to *impart* religious capabilities to man, but, on the contrary, to evolve and invigorate them—just as sun, air, and moisture, create not the virtues of the plant, but only nurture and stimulate it onward to a perfect growth. Yes, we do but exert one of the most wide-spread instincts and leanings of our common humanity, in thus resorting to our decorated temple. As far back as history extends, and as far round as observation surveys, every region, every nation, every religion, removed but a single step above the most brutal degradation, have been distinguished by costly structures, devoted to the worship of superior beings. In fact, nearly all the existing remains of architecture, which survive at present from the times of antiquity, and constitute those tangible links that connect us with the distant past, consist of temples constructed by the ancients with wonderful skill and science, and presenting to every eye the most beautiful and interesting objects of contemplation. Modern art has long despaired of surpassing their admirable perfections. Reflect, one moment, on those temples of Egypt, whose prevailing idea was that of ponderous, enormous, earthward-tending and earth-crushing power. Think of those lighter structures of Greece and Rome, suggestive of a perfect horizontal symmetry and exactness of proportion, as if partaking of the essence of fair surrounding life, though of no very lofty spiritual significance. Think, also, of those towering pagodas of Eastern and Southern Asia, which, overloaded with childish ornaments, seem as if mingling the puerilities of

earth with the aspirings of religion. Remember those numberless Gothic edifices of the Middle Ages, springing toward the sky with their buoyant, infinitely multiplied pointed arch, just as the religion of the Saviour embodies and lifts towards the heavens the manifold graces of the Christian life. Consider the numerous costly churches in our own and in every other land, whether Protestant or Papal, which our contemporaries are constantly erecting in imitation of the various schools and styles of their predecessors. Ponder on all these things, which are themselves but local, limited specimens of what the whole surface of our earth, while silently revolving through space, has exhibited to the eye of overarching heaven. Then will you understand something of that vivid sympathy with our intelligent race, which impelled us to bestow on this building whatever elaborate workmanship our means could command, and which now prompts us to consecrate, to use, and to enjoy this outward, monumental expression of our inward religious aspirations. I bless God for this noblest of all the moral features which link me with the mass of my fellow-beings. I rejoice in this one common characteristic which pervades men of every clime, every age, every race, and every religion, in all their infinite subdivisions. Aye, though they exclude and denounce each other—though Ebal and Gerizzim frown in mutual hostility—though circumstances remove and prejudices estrange them from one another—though they build up walls of communion, heaven-high, against those whose vocal organs cannot pronounce the exacted Shibboleth, yet they never can exclude each other from this common, precious inheritance. As the great dramatic poet observes, that

> "One touch of nature makes the whole earth kin,"

so I perceive in this universal tendency to spare no cost or

pains in the construction of religious edifices, something that ennobles, assimilates, and binds mankind together. Behold, also, the unconscious and spontaneous testimony thus everywhere rendered to the value of the religious element in man. Why does Wealth profusely lavish its stores—and Art exhaust its exquisite resources—and even struggling Labor surrender its cheerful contributions to decorate this earth with spacious, magnificent, and beautiful temples? Because they feel that no sentiment is so pure, so lofty, so inconceivably dear, as that which binds them to their wise and good Creator. Such then is the nature of the first, high, world-wide platform, on which we place our foot, as we now revisit our sanctuary.

But, thank God, it is our blessed privilege to ascend a far higher eminence than this. We enter, to-day, not merely a place of *religious* worship, but a place of *Christian* worship and instruction. We come, not merely as believers in *God*, but as believers in his *Son Jesus Christ*, through whom, in addition to previous special revelations, he has communicated to mankind the means of spiritual knowledge, advancement, sanctification, and eternal life. Instead of a heathen altar, with bloody sacrifices, mediating priests, and odorous incense, we have erected here a Christian pulpit, and on that pulpit we have laid and opened the Holy Bible—the record of God's revelations—the source of our choicest moral and spiritual ideas—and the foundation of our higher life. The very fact that the Bible is laid open in a temple of God—the very fact that the great body of sacred literature, produced by the most religious and original of all the nations of antiquity, is publicly and systematically inspected, studied, interpreted, enforced, developed, and discriminatingly appropriated by those who frequent the spot, is itself a glorious proof that our race has made a large and high advance—substituting, for a mere routine of sacrificial ceremonies,

a system involving intellectual reflection, and moral sensibility, and the stimulant springs of a nobler, purer experience.

This, then, is the medium through which we receive and adopt the religion of Christianity. In common with the vast multitude of its votaries, we joyfully ascribe to that religion a divine origin. The impress of divinity we see stamped not only on the miracles which accompanied its establishment, but on the very substance and essence of the religion itself—on the time, manner, and circumstances of its introduction—on the unequalled and inimitable character of its Great Founder—on his teachings, which comprehended the full circle of all desirable moral and religious truth—and on his life, spirit, and example, which constitute a rich and perpetually growing inheritance to the advancing generations of mankind. Deep in our inmost souls we feel our need of the power of that religion. Deep in our inmost souls do we experience its wonderful adaptedness to our moral constitution and necessities. Full upon our listening ears and startled consciences has fallen its first, imperial, and all-comprehensive injunction, *Repent.* We know that it addresses us as sinful men. We know that it invites, persuades, entreats, commands, and warns us to abandon the path of transgression and wrong, and to seek the righteousness and pardon of our forsaken God. We know that what it requires, that we ought to do and to be. We know that it adds, to the weight of its own inherent authority, the momentum and elevating influence of sanctions drawn from the invisible and eternal world. We have seen what this religion has done for mankind, (not in the bosom of one denomination or one communion alone, but among *all* its sects and denominations, of the most opposite and irreconcilable creeds,) and therefore we know that there must be in it some great and powerful elements, common to all denominations, and on no ac-

count to be exclusively arrogated and monopolized by any one party among them. Those precious elements we seek to attain, to cherish, to cultivate, and to develop, both for ourselves and for others, by all the means, efforts, and prayers, which our needing spirits can command. These are the higher objects, these are among the special motives, which have attracted our footsteps hither on this signal occasion. Believing that God has condescended to bestow on mankind this unspeakable gift of Christianity —these unsearchable riches of Christ—we would accept the celestial boon—we would faithfully endeavor to do our part in protecting it from error and corruption, and in perpetuating its saving influences over our own too forgetful hearts, and over the world in which we live. Therefore would we now enshrine it anew on this long visited and beloved spot. Here shall be our Bethesda, to which the soul, darkened, lamed, or withered in the collisions and entanglements of life, shall come to wash and be healed. We wish not to approach this place, except to hear preached the everlasting gospel. In this world of darkness, danger, imperfection, and sin, we will come here and listen to those GLAD TIDINGS from heaven, wherein Christ hath revealed, and confirmed it by his death, that the mercy of Jehovah is specially vouchsafed, not to external, laborious formalities, but to that believing, faithful condition of the inward spirit, which produces the fruits and beauties of an outward, righteous life. Thus would we aim and hope to be indeed *evangelical*, not in any low, technical, exclusive, sectarian sense, but along that more comprehensive and elevated tableland, which rejoices to admit, upon its sacred and liberal platform, every sincere and earnest follower of Christ. Should circumstances ever induce us to exchange the title of our church for some other, probably none could be selected, so agreeable to every one of our hearts, as the title, *Church of the Gospel.* But whether changed or not

in its title, it shall be to us in reality nothing *but* the Church of the Gospel. Hither we will come to worship the Father in the name of his beloved Son. Here we hope to spend, through our whole lives, a few hours of that regularly recurring Christian Sabbath, which Jesus teaches us was "made for man"—believing, as we do, that the day should be devoted to something better than mere animal repose or vacant recreation—that a change of occupation from the toils of life to the mental employments of the sanctuary is itself a noble kind of rest —and that we cannot better anticipate on earth the freedom of the heavenly inheritance, than by indulging in the meditations and exercises which will occupy us here. Here shall the Saviour's own brief model prayer be punctually uttered, together with those solemn litanies and trumpet-toned invocations which have been offered by the church through the ages that are past, as well as those extemporary devotions, which gifted piety and holiness may breathe from the heart, to engage the sympathies and hearts of others! Here, for our instruction, shall portions and lessons be regularly read from those histories, and treatises, and ethical codes, and sacred poems, and glowing prophecies, which prepared the way for the richer and brighter developments of the Messiah's kingdom—springing as they did from the bosom of his own beloved nation—studied as they were by himself from his early childhood—and appealed to by him as authority or illustration throughout his own unrivalled and immortal discourses. Here, too, will we listen, with untiring, unabating freshness of interest, to those divine discourses—that paramount code of ethics—those wonderfully beautiful parables, comprehending (in a form so attractive, though they seem to have been but casually uttered) the most profound principles of moral and religious science—those denunciations of hypocrisy and sin, which still, and will ever cause the human heart to trem-

ble—those comfortable invitations to the weary and heavy laden, so suited to this struggling world, and those soul-inspired and soul-affecting prayers, all which placed the utterances of Jesus on an elevation of wisdom and of love, never to be approached by the children of men. Here will we listen, also, to the brief, but inexhaustibly pregnant details of his own history—his solitary and devoutly meditative wanderings—his infinitely varied, but always beneficent miracles—his intercourse with his chosen disciples, and with every class of men in that strangely compounded and crowded microcosm of society around him—together with the scenes of his trial, and his most impressive and affecting death. Here, for our edification, shall be read the matchless writings of his inspired and authorized apostles. Here will we regularly celebrate his death, as we hope to do this day, according to the solemn, simple form, and through those expressive material symbols, which he enjoined on his twelve disciples—believing, that if there were good reasons why *they* should thus perpetuate his memory, there are even greater and stronger why we, at this distance of time, and in circumstances more strongly needing its aid and influence, should cherish an intimate union with the Saviour, by a special exercise of his own institution. Here we will present our infants and our fellow-adults for Christian baptism, pronouncing over them those few comprehensive words of Jesus, implying a benignant change from the limited and severe Mosaic dispensation, to a religion of which the Father of all mankind is the prime object of thought, his suffering and perfect Son is the mediator, and our relations with the Holy Spirit of God are the only sanction and imperative rule of life. Here we will lead our children to the Sabbath school, that embryo church of Christ. Here shall resound our voices in the songs and anthems of Christian praise, employing, as the medium of our utterances, those beautiful and suggestive

lyrical compositions (each hymn often a miniature gospel) that we are glad to borrow from every denomination, in which his pure spirit has prevailed. Here, also, shall the mystic rite of Christian marriage be celebrated—the solemn mutual vow being strengthened by sanctions drawn from the religion of the Saviour, while his own authoritative words shall be enunciated: "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Here shall devout and anxious attention be paid to the Christian pulpit—that instrument of the higher civilization of mankind—successor of the ancient desk of the Jewish synagogue and seat of the Grecian philosopher, combining the beneficial and enlightening influences of both, and adding an immeasurable extent of influence, of authority, and of regenerating, elevating and sanctifying power. From this place, accordingly, we hope to carry away those sacred impulses, those lofty resolutions, and something of those righteous habitudes, which may render our homes the scenes of many a Christian domestic virtue, arm us against the manifold conflicts and temptations of social life—bear into our retreats of solitude a sweet and awful sense of the divine presence—and invest the glooms of approaching death with a radiance not to be imparted by nature, but the fruit alone of a blessed Christian faith and Christian hope. And hither, also, when the last struggle is over, and our spirits shall be summoned from the present probationary scene, we hope to be borne on the silently-moving bier, that those words of power may be uttered over us, which are almost enough to awake the dead in their coffins: I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And most dear is it to us to think, that we shall then lie down in the neighboring flower-crowned cemetery, with some simple, modest Christian inscription on the slab above us, with those hanging branches gently and whisperingly waving their requiems over our heads,

while the music and the prayers which we once loved, shall come and speak to our mouldering frames of eternal life and eternal progress in the Christian's promised heaven.

Such are some of the positive influences and blessings which we hope to derive from this Church of the Gospel —such is the consecrated platform of Christianity on which we profess this day to place our rejoicing feet. It is an inheritance, common to ourselves and the mass of our fellow Christians. We find most of these elements pervading the systems of all denominations, however severed and estranged from each other by irreconcilable and invincible peculiarities. Happy is he, who by a divine eclecticism, can extract the essential good from them all, while with an honest, consciencious, and intrepid discrimination, he forbears from cherishing the local, temporary, human, contingent, excrescent, contradictory, and decaying elements with which he deems it to be combined.

At this stage of our reflections, accordingly, we find our feet placed on a third and still higher platform, as we revisit our beloved sanctuary. Not, indeed, on a higher elevation than Christianity, for man can occupy no ground more lofty than that; but higher, we mean, than the traditionary, divided, and sectarian Christianity, which alone the world in general has hitherto been able to witness or receive. The present discussion, therefore, would be wanting both in frankness and completeness, did we not proceed summarily to state, on this occasion, the distinctive grounds which partially separate us from the majority of our fellow Christians.

The most prominent of these distinctions, it hardly needs to be remarked, is that which confers upon us the name of Unitarian. What is it then which renders Unitarian Christianity so incomparably precious to us, that we are cheerfully willing to encounter and sustain

the severe, if not unkind judgments, the jealous exclusions, and the material sacrifices, to which the profession of it is exposed? We answer, that receiving the religion of Jesus Christ as true, we find, in the records of that religion, no warrant or command that we should pay a supreme homage and worship to any other being than the Universal Father. Deferring to the unquestionable authority of Jesus himself, and following his own sacred and uniform example, we endeavor to lift our hearts in prayer and adoration to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God. In that short, sublime, and unequalled form which he has left as a model of devotion to all the generations of mankind, he makes no allusion to any multiplex or complicated object of worship, but directs our attention to the Father alone. Thus, we not only feel *safe* in being ranged on the side of Jesus, but we find ourselves, so to speak, absolutely "shut up" to the truth which he inculcates. We can find no retreat from his great declaration in our text, "that the hour has come when all true worship must be rendered to the Father," as if condemning and crushing, by a prophetic stroke of three hundred years in advance, the daring enigmas and dreams of Athanasius. No more can we escape the authority of St. Paul, who, in addition to innumerable kindred statements, teaches, that to us there is but one God, and that that God is the Father; nor the authority of the Apostles James, Peter, John and Jude, each of whom, in their several epistles, speaks in the same distinctive, exclusive way, of "God the Father." Nor can we resist or escape the further corroboration of the same truth in the disclaimers which Jesus so frequently makes of an equality with his Father, or of any independent power, will, or authority of his own, every where insisting as he does, upon his inferiority to that Great Being, in terms and on occasions, where it seems impossible that, without strange and fraudulent collusion, he should

silently imply any twofold nature in himself. The scriptures, by their own rules and usages, furnish, at the same time, abundant explanations of those passages which seem, by a figurative orientalism, to militate with the strict Unity of God. Thus, listening to Jesus and his apostles, we are most happily relieved from those perplexing entanglements, those distressing doubts, and those seemingly contradictory propositions, which would irresistibly intrude into our minds, if endeavoring to worship the Deity according to the formulas of the popular creed, as drawn up by the false and over-refined verbal philosophy of the third and fourth centuries. Two of the latest and most trust-worthy authorities in ecclesiastical history —the pious Neander and the learned Chevalier Bunsen— represent and demonstrate the primitive faith of Christianity to have differed from the Athanasian creed as widely as light differs from darkness, and to have been expressed in terms which can be cordially embraced by the great majority of modern Unitarians. We certainly *lose* nothing by this singleness and simplicity of our conceptions of Jehovah; for all that can possibly be ascribed to the three persons of the Deity, pertains, in an equal degree, and without confusion or contradiction, to that One mysterious Being, whom we adore as infinite in his power, perfect in his wisdom, and exhaustless in his compassionate beneficence.

Nor do we lay a paramount and exclusive stress on this single doctrine alone. In our relations to religion, we cherish a variety of other principles and views, which may rightly be called by the collective name of Liberal Christianity. For they are maintained by a large and increasing number of the pious and the worthy in all denominations, and they seem to flow from luminous and comprehensive surveys of the nature of man, the experience of the past, and the well understood teachings of the scriptures. Far be it from us that we should exclu-

sively arrogate to ourselves the title of Liberal Christians. For it is as sure and evident that there is a tendency among thoughtful, cultivated, and independent minds, in the religious world, to embrace the principles in question, as that the bright sun and his attendant planets are approximating to a particular constellation in the heavens. To the most prominent of these principles we deem it becoming in us to advert on the present occasion.

Liberal Christianity, then, declines paying to the letter of the Bible a blind, superstitious, undiscriminating worship, but earnestly aims to seize, inwardly digest, and apply its interior pure and comprehensive spirit.

Liberal Christianity denies the total depravity of human nature; but it deduces from the Bible, as well as from conscious and universal experience, the doctrine, that there is in man a fearful and early, if not inborn *mixture* of good and evil, calling us to a life-long moral struggle, in which our native, though weakened energies, are assisted by the Providence, the Gospel, and the Spirit of God.

Liberal Christianity acknowledges that there may be in man hereditary tendencies to sin, as well as other influences coming down from the mysterious Past. But it insists that Adam was originally made as liable to sin as any of his descendants, and that both he and they are personally, exclusively, and individually responsible for every respective transgression.

Liberal Christianity inculcates a future just and merciful retribution for all righteousness and sin; and it receives the highly figurative language of scripture on this awful subject, as expressive of certain eternal relations, sanctions, principles, and tendencies in the moral government of Jehovah.

Liberal Christianity gratefully accepts the death of Christ as a mighty and affecting means of procuring man's salvation; but refuses such an interpretation of scrip-

ture as would substitute the Saviour in the room of the sinner, and would obliterate individual conscience and responsibility.

Liberal Christianity is ready to acknowledge the real expedience, impressiveness, or venerable beauty of any form of ecclesiastical government or mode of worship. But when such forms or modes presume to arrogate an exclusive authority over mankind, or specifically or virtually to identify themselves alone with Christianity, she resolutely rejects such pretensions, as having no warrant or foundation in fact, logic, history, scripture, or necessity.

Liberal Christianity forbids not the construction of creeds and confessions, as convenient instruments of union or of demonstration among those of a common faith. But she resists the imposition of them on others, as distinctive titles to the Christian name and privileges.

Liberal Christianity cherishes an invariable aim and tendency to reduce all articles of belief, which are employed as terms of communion, to the fewest possible in number and the simplest possible in character—so as to rescue conscience from a very perilous snare, and to unite in one common sympathy and action all who possess and exhibit the true spirit of the Saviour.

Liberal Christianity lays more and more stress on life and conversation, and less and less upon speculative belief.

Liberal Christianity aims to secure more and more the respect and tenderness of the church towards individual conscience, instead of crushing and absorbing the conscience of the individual in the will and despotism of the church.

Liberal Christianity presumes not to erect any innocent practices or recreations into bars of Christian communion—knowing the vast danger to the conscience of unnecessarily and unscripturally enlarging the catalogue of sins, and of multiplying such as are merely artificial and conventional.

Liberal Christianity believes in and works hopefully for a progressive future, instead of idolizing and stereotyping the faded Past.

Liberal Christianity delights in searching and welcoming all possible affinities, resemblances, and sympathies among the followers of the Saviour, instead of detecting and magnifying unavoidable points of difference.

Liberal Christianity regards deliverance from sin as the primary idea of salvation; but deliverance from the consequences of sin, however terrible, as only secondary and of inferior importance.

Friends of Christian freedom! possessors of the godlike and immortal birth-right of humanity! Are not these principles worth living and dying for? Are they not worthy of being enshrined in a structure as costly and as beautiful as that which this day surrounds us? Are they not worthy of being embodied in perpetual institutions, and transmitted down through the hands of our remote descendants, in the hope that the great church of the Future may avoid the mistakes, the divisions, the misfortunes, and the disastrous influences of the imperfect, though still glorious church of the Past?

We thank God that he has been pleased to appoint us the trustees, humble and feeble as we are, of the several great distinctive principles which have now been enumerated. We thank him for assigning to us the post of honor and the van of conflict, in that march which we are convinced he has appointed for the ages. We thank him for the multitudes of the good and pure, scattered through all denominations, who heartily sympathize with us, and bid us God-speed; thus forming for us, in spite of ecclesiastical organizations and invidious exclusions, as desirable a "church invisible"—as large and cheering a "communion of saints" as our hearts can aspire to. We thank him that we find every day so many of our brethren in other communions, who, on analyzing the essential

elements of their real faith, confess that they never did, and never can believe any thing materially different from our own. We thank him for the vast numbers of those who, though deliberately, conscientiously, and radically differing from us, yet respect our sincere convictions, recognize our perfect right to liberty of opinion, and presume neither to condemn us nor to exclude us from their fellowship. We thank him that the positive articles of our belief are found embosomed and approved in the creed of every Christian denomination, while almost every Christian denomination entertains other views and principles that are sternly repudiated by all the rest. We thank him for the pre-eminent advantages of this enlightened age, and for the religious liberty of this glorious country. We thank him for granting us the ability to repair and re-enter this honorable and lovely church of our own, which, like the religious principles we profess, is not only built upon old and well-tried foundations, but takes the liberty also of modifying, adding to, retrenching, or adorning the superstructure, according as taste, reason, and conscience prescribe. We thank him that not a life nor a limb has been destroyed in the long work of its re-construction, and we pray that not a *soul* may be lost in the longer work which is to be carried on within it. We thank him that we are permitted to re-occupy it, unincumbered by a pecuniary debt, and would to God that our many trespasses against him might be as easily obliterated. We thank him for the auspicious circumstances of this day, and for the many dear friends, from far and near, who have come to sustain us by their presence, and to gladden us by their sympathy. Float into the waters, as we launch thee now, thou brave, and beautiful, and consecrated ark! Though thou canst secure but little sympathy from the churches that surround thee, yet emulate at least their acknowledged piety, their unquestionable virtues, and their varied, sanctifying influences, flowing, as we must fondly believe, from

one sacred spring, which is common to thyself and them. Let the only animated contest between you be, the production of GOOD FRUITS—the scattering of heavenly blessings round. Let it never be said that the Unitarian church brought a shade of stain upon the fair escutcheon of Charleston. If our devotions here end in nothing but vain admiration of thy artistical proprieties—if we cannot transfer to our daily lives thy speaking harmonies, thy fine proportions, thy painful workmanship, and thy solemn spiritual graces, our visits to thee will prove but miserable mockery, the very dust and ashes of a pretended religious life. Better, far better, to worship in some poor, dilapidated shed, where the sun, and wind, and rain, could at least communicate through the crevices the benignant grace of God. Bear on, to our children and our children's children of many generations, something from us far better, higher, purer, than such short-lived, empty enjoyments. Convey to them the immortal principles that have comforted, sustained, and blessed their humble but conscience-guided fathers. We dedicate thee now and forever to Truth, to Freedom of Conscience, to Spiritual Liberty, to Honest Inquiry, to enlightened Charity, and to an enlarged Christian love. And in some far distant day, when the traces of decaying age shall be discerned around thy buttresses, and mouldings, and pinnacles, and spires, mayest thou deserve and receive something more than the admiration of the antiquarian. Let the Christian lover of humanity, as he pensively wanders among the neighboring old tombs and monuments, be enabled to bestow upon thee one affectionate glance, and say—"There stands the pile from which nought but good influences have ever proceeded—blessings on the tabernacle which has faithfully ministered heavenly and earthly blessings to generations as they glided past!"

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.

BY

REV. G. W. BURNAP, D.D.

OF BALTIMORE.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.

We dedicate this house to Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe, the Father of angels and of men. We set it apart to the sacred uses of Christian worship, to the holy purposes of prayer and praise, the communion of saints, and the celebration of the rites of our most holy faith.

We consecrate it, O Father, to the teaching of the religion of Jesus Christ, the Son of thy love, the Messenger of thy grace, the First Begotten from the dead, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Symbol and Pledge of immortality to man.

O thou, whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, be graciously pleased to accept this offering at our hands. Without thee, we are nothing, and without thy blessing, nothing that we do can prosper. Command, we entreat thee, thy blessing upon it, and make it effectual to accomplish the purpose for which thy servants, with careful hands and devoted hearts, have raised it up.

Here may thy truth be dispensed in its purity and power. From this place may the holiest influences of our religion be diffused.

Here may the gracious promise and prophecy of the Saviour be fulfilled, that he came to establish all over the earth the worship of the true God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth. On this altar, may the fire of true devotion be kindled, and never suffered to go out.

May thy blessing rest on those who shall minister at this altar in holy things. May grace be given unto them so to go in and out before this people, so to walk before them in all the paths of duty, that the eye that sees them may bless them, and the ear that hears them may bear witness unto them. May they worthily present unto thee the devotions of thy people, who shall, from Sabbath to Sabbath, assemble in this place. Touch their lips with heavenly fire, that they may kindle the holy affections of every breast, and cause the sacrifice of prayer to come up acceptably before thee. Here, with pure hands, may they break unto thy people the bread of life, and feed them with knowledge and understanding.

Here may the aged come to meditate before God, and while they review with gratitude and penitence, the long experience of departed years, may the comforting influences of thy Holy Spirit descend into their hearts, may their decaying strength be renewed, their hopes be lifted up from this transitory world to the living God, and thus may their souls be prepared, when the earthly house of their tabernacle shall be dissolved, to find an entrance into that house of God, that building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Here may the middle-aged resort, those on whom devolve the daily toils and cares of life. Here may they learn not to become absorbed and lost in worldly anxiety for the things which perish with the using, but while they are diligent in business, to be fervent in spirit. Here may their souls be refreshed, their faith be confirmed, their good purposes be fixed, so that they may return to the business of the world prepared for victorious encounter with its trials and temptations. Here may that wisdom which cometh from above, so teach them to walk before their households, that their piety may descend with their name to their offspring, and their children may rise up and call them blessed.

To this altar may the young be brought in the morning of their days. Here may they be taught to know thee, the God of their fathers, and to serve thee with a perfect heart and a willing mind. Here may they learn that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, and as they advance to maturity, and form characters for time and eternity, may this place be to them none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.

Here may the prosperous come, and in the midst of their abundance and success, remember that God, from whose bountiful hand flow riches, and honor, and joy. Here may they learn not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth all things richly to enjoy. Here may they be taught so to use the mammon of unrighteousness, that when earthly things fail, they may be received into everlasting habitations.

Here may the unfortunate man repair and seek refuge from the troubles of life, in the sanctuary of God. Amidst the wreck of earthly hopes may he learn to bear up with Christian fortitude, under the pressure of earthly calamity, and to lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

Here may the mourner come, and bowing submissively before the sovereign Arbiter of life and death, find consolation in the hopes and promises of the gospel. Here while his heart overflows at the recollection of those who were lately his companions in the house of prayer, may he learn the uncertain tenure of all human things, that the longest life is but a span, and becomes as nothing, when compared with that eternity which is the inheritance of the immortal soul.

Here may the penitent bow down, and while he is humbled by a sense of his unworthiness, may he be taught that the mercies of God are infinite, transcending human guilt. Let him listen to the gracious message which thou didst send to our sinful race, through thy prophet of old.

Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Let him remember, that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. Here may the troubled conscience find peace and the penitent offender receive strength, to go his way and sin no more.

Here may the gospel be preached in the plenitude of its power and the fulness of its grace, and prove to multitudes the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. May those who shall here speak in thy name, be sons of thunder to the hardened and the bold, but sons of consolation to every contrite heart.

Here, with devout and reverent hearts, may the rites of our holy faith be celebrated. At this fount of baptism, may each new generation be consecrated to God. Here, from age to age, may the humble followers of Christ, with grateful affection, surround the memorials of his dying love, and may he be made known to them in the breaking of bread in all the grandeur, in all the tenderness, in all the beauty of his character. May the cup of thanksgiving be the token of a holy joy and an anticipation of the final triumph of the great assembly of the just made perfect, wherein shall be gathered the holy and the just, who shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

And when, O God, the end of all things shall come, when the great white throne shall be placed, and before his face who sitteth thereon the heavens shall flee away and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the heavens shall pass away, when these walls shall crumble, and the earth itself shall be found no more, may the multitude who shall have worshipped here, find an inheritance in the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

BY

REV. CHARLES M. TAGGART,

JUNIOR PASTOR.

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW CHURCH.

THE SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MATERIAL SYMBOLS.

The incense of worship has again just risen within these walls, which for a period have given no echo to the voice of praise.

Within that period, how greatly has the aspect of this structure changed! Those massive buttresses, affording protection and proportion to the walls, have risen round the edifice, crowned with ornate pinnacles, whilst similar graceful pinnacles are ever pointing from the summit of yon stately tower. These strong, upright, unbending columns, have risen to support the ponderous weight of vaulted roof, and arch, and tracery, and pendant. This party-colored glass on every side, has been inserted to soften the first glare of sunlight, and, with emblematic signs, to arrest the wandering or observing, the thoughtful or the thoughtless eye, and by their symbolic language, through the imagination, to address the judgment and the heart. And all these varied features are conjoined in such relations and proportions, as to form, together, a substantial, commodious and attractive sanctuary—for the offering of the soul's worship, the contemplation of truth-seeking minds, and the culture of sympathizing, yearning, philanthropic hearts.

All movement is not progress. But it is reasonable to presume, that all our accustomed fellow-worshippers not only entertain the hope, but have faith to believe, that this change is designed to be, and will be productive of improvement.

These changes have been made within the period of two years—a period comparatively brief, and yet considerable, in view of the common allotments of our mortal life. Within this considerable period of your mortal portion of eternity, since you last reflected, sympathized, and worshipped within these venerable walls, what similar or corresponding changes have been made in your experience, your thoughts, purposes, character, your social, moral, and spiritual life? What deep-laid buttresses of solid knowledge, have been reared against the walls of *reason* and of judgment, to strengthen and protect you against the faults, follies, and temptations—and even against the misfortunes, accidents, and contingencies, of this visible and mutable condition? What stately and majestic *columns* of reasonable *faith*, have you reared along the path of your *experience*, in order to support the ponderous burden of arches, entablatures, traceries and pendants, which, under the names of disappointments and successes, joys and sorrows, hopes and fears—compose the variegated scenes, the ceilings, naves, and galleries of human life?

What additions have you made to the media through which the lights and shades of earth and time concentrate on your path, in order to soften the glare of error, by which the eyes are often dazzled, and to strengthen the vision which is often dimmed by the sudden brilliancy of truth?

In your contemplations, retrospections, and serious searchings, what emblems or *symbols* have you discovered, which, by recalling the *past* and illumining the *present*, may assist you in anticipating the future—at once illustrating, suggesting, warning, and promising; lightening sorrows, dispelling fears, and confirming faith?

Then, exterior to, and over all, well-proportioned, elaborate, and visible, what *pinnacles* of *moral purity* and virtuous deeds, have you raised around you, to adorn the whole structure of your daily life, through rain and sun-

shine, through storm and calm, through darkness and light, ever pointing upwards, expressive of your resolve, your action and aspiration, in their tendency, onward, upward and divine?

The *changes*, effected in this *edifice*, you *easily* can perceive and estimate. *Can you so* discern—can you number, can you measure, are you even conscious of the corresponding changes now suggested, in your intellectual, moral, and spiritual *character?* Or, have you this day re-entered yonder portal, with more of *fear* and less of faith, than when you last left it, as worshippers? Have the cares, trials, and responsibilities of life, multiplied above you, and have you *now* less courage, patience, and energy, to bear the burden and to overcome the depression? Have weaknesses, vices, evil customs, and personal sins, drawn you within the whirl of their dark, foaming, blinding vortex—and have you *less* of that *trust* in the all-subduing power of *goodness*, which can enable you to resolve, resist, struggle, and, torn and draggled though you be, to regain a spot at least, on the peaceful and solid rock of personal *holiness?*

Were *such* the changes which, during this period, have occurred in your experience, then what a mournful passage in your history would this interval have proved! How well you might long, then, to have these two years blotted from the annals of all time, and the memory of all beings, and the blank to stand forever unfilled, and shrouded in the silence of unbroken night!

But every circumstance of this occasion, forbids the supposition. The auguries of this day are all auspicious. You return this day, with *remembrance* of a past, not wholly unimproved, and *now* anticipating an experience of higher progress. Your grateful memories, now deepen into prospects of profounder gratitude. Your recollection of former joys, *now* blend with visions of joys approaching, and yet more exalted. Almost every object before

and around you at this moment, has a lesson to impart, and with an eye and ear ready to interpret, may afford you eloquent teachings. Yon ever-open, never-slumbering *Eye*, representing Omniscience, and looking ever towards the open *Book*—silently and ceaselessly reminds you of your solemn duty, as beings of limited knowledge and fallible powers—through book or object, word or works of the Creator—through every agent, human and divine—to search, explore, and willingly accept, each hour of life, the greatest, smallest, and *every* fresh revelation or disclosure of truth—of principles, laws, means, and modes, which may contribute to your intellectual enlargement and spiritual growth.

Without attempting to represent the person of Jesus, where all representations fall so far short of our conceptions of the benign dignity which must have marked his countenance, we are content with the *words* which describe his office and his character. Yonder *letters*—I. H. S.—representing, when interpreted, the words—"Jesus, Saviour of men"—connected with and followed by the bright and star-gemmed *Crown*, remind you of that sublime life of strict fidelity to truth, terminating in triumphant death, and thus becoming, to all who recognize and apply his principles, a saving Deliverer from the terrific power and degrading tendencies of sin; and yet more, cheering every faithful striver for the right, with the *assurance*, that *peace* shall follow conflict, and dignity attend the triumph, as in the recorded words of Jesus—"To him that *overcometh*, will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as *I also overcame*, and am set down with my Father."

Here, at a glance, you are reminded of the old dispensation superseded by the *new*. Below, Moses, the *lawgiver*, and Aaron, the *priest*, with the covenant ark between them, representing the *ceremonial* religion, which proclaimed God as the Jehovah and *King* of Israel.

Above, are figures representing the persons of the four Evangelists, the biographers of Jesus—that Christ, who proclaimed God, not as the Jehovah of a nation or a race, but as "Our Father," the everlasting Father, and righteous Judge of all nations, all ages, and all worlds—and no respecter of persons, but justly rendering to every *soul* according to its *own* deeds. The one scene speaks of the *letter* and the *law;* the other, of the *spirit* and the *life.* The *one,* speaks of outward rites, and sanguinary sacrifices; the *other,* of inward faith, and the bloodless and perpetual offerings of sincere, trustful, and energetic hearts.

And here, standing conspicuously, ever in your view, and in other portions of the building, the *emblematic Cross* speaks to you at once and always, of *love, innocence, patience, endurance,* and fidelity, even unto death. What unmixed beatitude *may* await this world, when, in the fulness of time, the Christian reign of *peace, good will,* and glory to the highest, shall be established on the earth, we have now no prescience, to determine or describe. But till that period shall come, let the *symbolic cross* stand before us, perpetually teaching, that *human effort* is still the price of human progress. That spiritual repose is yet to be secured by spiritual conflict. That endurance is still the cost of faithfulness to duty—endurance, it may be, to the extent of tears, blood, and bodily death.

In the words of the immaculate teacher himself, *we* are to "*follow* in his *steps*"—and, surrendering all for truth, even *literally,* if required, "take up *our* cross and follow him." *Toil* is still the *Calvary,* which virtue must ascend, and *self-sacrifice* is the *cross,* which *trust in truth* even now must bear.

But it is not only these emblems immediately before you, from which you may deduce instructive lessons; there are other noiseless, but potent teachers, now around you.

The marble tablets in yonder vestibule, the monuments, and tombs, and grassy mounds, with the dissolving remains, which now repose beneath the flowers and foliage around this edifice; all these remind you of the limits of your knowledge of the laws life, of the brevity and precariousness of all things mortal. Their footprints may be *covered*, but not *destroyed*—all those, once here, *have* left landmarks along the road of time. By their faults and misfortunes they admonish us, whilst by their virtues and successes in the battle of life, they encourage us—as if saying—"Do thou quickly, whatsoever thy hand findeth to do."

And, beside these voices of the dead, there is a living voice, which still remains to speak to you—the voice of one whom you delight to honor. Through the successive years of a whole generation, has he faithfully served his Maker, and ministered to you. And though the wintry flakes of age have fallen upon his locks; though the once firm hand begins to tremble; though time begins to stamp its venerable signature upon his countenance; still, with the mild clearness of his paternal voice, he stands here to address you, with the vigor of even youthful intellect. In view of his patient labors and the visible maturity of their fruits, he might, if called at any moment, exclaim with Simeon—"Lord, let now thy servant depart in peace, for mine *eyes* have *seen* thy salvation;" yet, in the order of divine beneficence he remains, with the promise of yet numberless occasions, to speak to you of life, duty, justice, and immortality.

Then, without, you hear sounds of other voices; the dogmatism of churches; the struggling of the nations; the mental darkness of millions throughout the earth; the searching spirit of the age; the calls of waiting and hoping humanity—all appeal to you, to be faithful to your exalted privileges and exalted powers. And, then, *all these* conjoined—things animate and inanimate—unite

this day with earnestness, solemnity, and fervor, to remind and *assure* you, that, despite the externals of religion, despite forms, doctrines, books, or pulpit teachings, it remains with and *in yourselves*, to determine whether this church edifice shall be a help, a school, and sanctuary, to your own and other hearts; to man—man formed to dignity and destined to immortality—or, whether it shall be only a place for multiplying sorrows, embittering minds, stifling consciences, and degrading souls.

You may come here from your homes, being prepossessed by one-sided and half-formed opinions—bringing with you only a captious, critical, impatient, and rashly judging spirit—and not Moses nor the prophets, not one from the dead, nor an angel from heaven, could convince, or soothe, or please, or profit you. You would be ever searching for, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth. And the fruit of such attendance here, would only be disquietude and distrust, if not bigotry, hypocrisy, and vice.

But, on the other hand, you may leave your homes unreluctantly, and come here, in that calm, earnestly inquiring spirit, which rejoiceth in the truth, which hopeth and believeth all things to be intended for the best. In this spirit, remembering that all are inquirers, and no one is infallible, you may place the very best construction, at all times, upon the words and worship, and so give to the ministrations here, a significance, and find in them a moral nutriment, which even the ministers themselves, in their very best intentions, had neither purposed nor perceived. And the fruit of attendance here, in *such* a spirit, will be conciliation, peace, benevolence, intellectual and spiritual progress.

Standing upon the truly *Catholic* and *Evangelical* ground of *Unitarian* Christians; keeping unity of spirit in the bond of peace; admitting no limits to devout inquiry; repudiating every shadow of a chain on private judg-

ment; strictly responsible for interpretation and belief, only to the author of the soul, it is a chief object with you, as conducive to social elevation and personal purity, to recognize every feature, and avoid every form of error. Thus it is essential, that you stand ever ready, to acknowledge freely and surrender bravely, the most cherished *wrong* in sentiment or action—at the same time welcoming with joy, that which comes to you, commending itself to your enlightened reason, as divinely right—whether from work or word of God, from art or science, from history or experience. It is *yours*, with faith in the existence of the true and good, patiently to investigate, maturely to consider, and, in an uncondemning spirit, to discern the single grain amidst the clouds of chaff, and rescue the diamond from the mass of rubbish.

Our faith being something *positive* and not negative, perpetually implying something to be *done*, not merely something to be doubted or believed—not only an expedient for the exigency of a death-bed, but a religion to *live* by, an eternal *law* of *action* for *all* of life, this *side* of death, through death, beyond death, and eternally in infinite progression—our faith is to us a pearl of inestimable price, and we rejoice to build beautiful sanctuaries for its inculcation. Still, trusting God for his goodness and truth for its eternal triumph, without envy, fear, or denunciation, *we*, Unitarian Christians, can afford to welcome every new church, bearing the Christian name of any body of sincere men. All churches possess some element of truth. Blended with error, as we may believe to be *their* views, we can unreluctantly say, to every church of true hearts—"Heaven prosper you, according to the genuineness of your worship, and your search for truth"—confident, as we are, that *error* must die, for it is mortal in its nature, whilst *truth* can never perish, for it is immortal as God.

It is not ours to repine and fret, and indolently resign

ourselves to what we fancy to be inevitable evils of existence. A short time since, when here within and around this edifice, you looked upon the disjointed pieces, lying in disordered heaps, it was not easy to conceive that this chaos of material, could ever be raised to this vaulted roof, and arranged and fitted into this elaborate and delicate tracery, even now in appearance complicated, at a hasty glance, but, as the view continues, gracefully harmonizing into exquisite forms, each part related to every other, and all, combining to the completeness and unity, of an obvious and beautiful design.

So, may you learn, in the disjointed events and vicissitudes of your experience—as moral agents, architects, and builders under God—with faith, knowledge, and labor as your instruments, to arrange, frame, and ultimately fit, the scattered parts, into the harmonious completeness, of a beautifully designed and immortal life.

Even now, with *integrity* of *purpose* as a solid basis, with virtuous deeds of various magnitudes and forms, with pinnacles of benevolence, and battlements of unstained conscience, you may build up a moral character before the world, to stand through summer suns and wintry gales, serene and changeless—upright in its stateliness, like the just proportions of yon massive, but symmetrical and graceful tower, which, before all beholders, stands, true and undeviating in its majestic altitude.

Now, brothers and friends, the prayer has been offered; this edifice is, from henceforth, while it stands, *consecrate* to the *worship* of the everlasting Father—to the highest *progress* of the human *soul*—to the *culture* of minds—the *comfort* of bodies—and the *redemption* of the world from the power of error and sin.

Without the faintest shadow of a superstitious reverence for places or for things, but according with the known philosophy of mind—the principle of association in

thoughts and emotions—let nothing within, nor any thing without this church, be voiceless or meaningless to you; but let every part hereof, in the name of the Father, and of his Son, and of his holy spirit, from this hour, be inaugurated, as a silent but ceaseless teacher of moral truth. As often as you approach its portals, though you omit the act, yet feel the sentiment, as Moses felt it, at the vision of the burning bush—"Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy." Thus hallowed, and tenderly associated with your loftiest thoughts, and purest affections, may you find this place, to be a school of the mind, a sanctuary of the heart, and a home of the soul.

SALUTATION OF THE CHURCHES.

BY

REV. JOHN PIERPONT, JR.,

OF SAVANNAH, GEO.

SALUTATION OF THE CHURCHES.

CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:—It is mine, in response to the invitation of your senior pastor, to offer you the Salutation of the Churches, as a part of these dedicatory services. The earnest hope of your hearts is now realized in the completion of this house of worship. The last brick is laid; the last angle is pointed; the aisles, the arches, and the altar, are finished; the consecrating prayer is offered; and this holy and beautiful temple is now dedicated to the worship of the one living and true God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Although addressing you with no delegated authority, I yet can be charged with no arrogant assumption, with no unmeaning use of words, when I assure you of the congratulations of the churches in this hour of your joy. At least, I am free to offer my own, and to express my lively interest in your welfare and prosperity as a Christian society. Representing the only society in this neighborhood, whose members sympathize with your views of Christianity, and who have most cheerfully and fraternally responded to your invitation to be present and share in the rejoicings of this occasion; sustaining, also, the most friendly relations with your venerable and beloved pastor, whose counsels have guided, whose sympathy has cheered, and whose success has strengthened me, when counsels, and sympathy, and strength have been most needed; I could not, even had my inclination been at variance with the request, have declined his invitation to

address you with words of congratulation, expressive of the joy of the churches, in this beautiful evidence of your prosperity.

Isolated, as this society is, from frequent and social relations with its sister churches, though *not* isolated from that Christian sympathy which is the very life and joy of our simple faith, expressions of congratulation, on occasions like the present, possess a peculiar interest and value. They are the language of Christian fellowship, whose fraternal interest no distance can lessen, no diversity of worldly pursuits and views should be allowed to destroy. If Christian fellowship is not an idle or unmeaning term, it will justify all and more than all that I may say. Like the faith which makes all visible things beautiful, and all invisible things *realities*—like the love of that pure Being, whose life sanctified our nature, and in whose name we approach the Infinite, Christian fellowship embraces all, of every name, creed, clime, and communion, within the expansive circle of its sympathies and benefactions. It is the magnetic wire of the affections that passes unimpeded round the world, throbbing with the pulsations, and vibrating with the sorrows and the joys of all. Thus, the joy of this hour, born with the baptism of this exquisite temple into the service of God, will be responded to by the most distant churches with whose views you sympathize, and whose name you bear.

These graceful walls in which we are now assembled, though adorned with fresh devices and emblems of art, each possessing a sacred significance and speaking its own language, are yet ancient and reverend walls. They have been garlanded with the prayers of generations—garlands wreathed for immortality. They are fragrant with the incense which, through long years, has ascended from the ancient altar of sacrifice—the incense of pure and devout feeling, of noble aspiration and holy resolve. They stand as monuments of the past, with their storied

record of the worship of those whose spirits have long since passed on to a holier worship still, in that "temple not made with hands." The new garments in which these walls are now arrayed, are the fitting robes of their re-birth; while these consecrating services may be considered as their baptism into a new and blessed life.

It may not be amiss, but it may be profitable, to refer briefly to a thought suggested by the *beauty* of the sanctuary which is now devoted to worship, namely: the ministry of the beautiful, in church architecture, upon the religious affections.

There are those in every Christian community, who regard the expensive adornment of churches as a lavish waste of means, which might better be devoted to objects of charity or to the dissemination of truth. We will respect their views, although we may think them erroneous. History bears its testimony to the favorable influence of beauty in church architecture. Without referring to the sacred shrines of heathen Greece and Rome, whose ruins are still to be seen by the traveller, or even to the temples of the ancient Hebrews, it will be sufficient to state that it has been the custom, for centuries, beneath the sunny skies of Italy, on the fertile hills of France, and among the wild mountains of Spain—indeed, in all the countries in Christian Europe—to invite art into the domain of religion; to build magnificent cathedrals, and adorn them with symbolic expressions of Christian faith. Pictures and statues, windows and niches, tablets and pendants, have thus preserved, through the ages, material memories of the long list of holy men and martyrs who have defended their faith with their lives. These have spoken and still speak with impressive eloquence to the religious heart. They are the cherished record of the reverence, the devotion, and the penitence of ages. They are never silent. Empires decay, dynasties change, revolutions alter the existing order of things,

but still *these* speak on, perpetuating the reverence, even as they hallow the faith of the race.

Of the various forms of church architecture, none, it seems to me, speaks to the heart with the same impressiveness as the Gothic. The image of nature, it repeats its language. In Europe it is the form which most generally prevails. From the mighty cathedrals which have stood there for ages, transmitting, from generation to generation, the Christian name and faith, there are voices audible only to the absorbed soul. Their aisles, worn with the footsteps of generations—their walls, darkened by the draperies of time—their altars, redolent with the incense of confession—their high arches receding in the distance, and reverberating the sweet strains which float in melody from the organ—their stained windows, through which the sun's rays stream as with the mellowed light of evening, penetrating the chancel, and lighting up the altar with mystic beauty, and bathing the worshippers as in a sea of gold—their hoary turrets black with age, and their lofty spires, whose summits are crowned with the cross which reflects the moon's pale light in silvery radiance, as if it were the Christian constellation inviting the pilgrim to the skies; is there not in all these a language to the religious heart? Are there not memories and associations connected with them, oftentimes more sacred and lasting than when, in low, impassioned tones, the preacher breathes out his soul in prayer, or speaks with earnest heart of those eternal things which, though dim and shadowy now to the mortal eye, like the spectres which seem to haunt cathedral aisles at midnight, are none the less realities to his faith? These human voices may "pass in waves away," and be forgotten. But there are other voices, by day and by night, in these material things, and which are never silent. "And we can easily," I use the appropriate language of another, "enter into the enthusiasm of those ardent admirers of the Gothic style,

as exhibited in a finished cathedral, who look upon it as the very poetry of architecture—who regard every great and perfect cathedral as a 'great religious epic,' its storied windows, each of which shoots down a stained and shadowy stream of light,' as so many cantos of the loftiest poetry of the Christian faith; every statue in its niches as an historical episode; every exquisite canopy, every heaven-seeking turret, every fair pendant, or crocketed finial, as a beautiful symbol, presenting to the eye the loveliest revelations of nature,

'In strange materials, and an unknown mode.'"*

Let us rejoice that the days of plain churches are fast passing away. Civilization, which seeks something more than the *merely useful*, presses art into its service to beautify cities and villages, to adorn the mansions and gardens of the wealthy, and even, as she passes on her errand of beauty, to touch the houses of the poor with the hem of her garment, that their homes may smile as with perpetual sunshine. It would be a reproach to any Christian community were its churches, in point of artistic elegance and fitness, disproportioned to the magnificence of its private dwellings and storehouses. It would speak too sadly of indifference, even were there no higher motive for liberality. As our Christian faith is adorned by the beauty of the life which it blesses; as the universe, fashioned by the Creator's hand, is perpetually speaking to the heart with voices which seem but the outbreathings of this Spirit; as the eye delights to rest upon and the heart to drink in the inspiration of beauty, whether in nature or in art; and as these all exert a moral influence upon the soul, so, and especially, should man seek to imitate, in the house which he erects for worship, that charm which so symbolizes his faith and speaks so mysteriously, yet eloquently, to the divinest affections. We

* Rev. R. P. Cutler.

naturally become interested in and attached to that for which we make sacrifice; and, as naturally, our interest increases in proportion to the greatness of the sacrifice. I ask not that churches, either in magnitude or beauty, should be disproportionate to our means. This should neither be expected nor required. But they should, at least, keep pace with the wealth, the taste, and the culture of the age. Around no public building do so many holy associations and pleasing memories cluster, as around that wherein we first listen to the words of life, and receive the waters at the baptismal font, or break the bread in affectionate remembrance; wherein we breathe our silent vows and offer the prayer of penitence and faith; and wherein our spirits, in the season of religious contemplation, are borne upward as on angel wings into communion with God. And if these associations and memories bring back forms of beauty; if they recall in age what the eye delighted to rest upon in youth, it cannot be said to be wholly in vain that art should have been invoked to make that beautiful which has so great power over the heart and life. There is a language spoken from sacred walls, to which the most careless may not always be indifferent. There is a ministry in the beautiful emblems of the Christian faith and hope, often more powerful, though silent, than in the voice which breaks from the preacher's lips and is soon forgotten. The language and ministry of beauty, then, are the language and ministry of God.

You, Christian friends, with true liberality and with faith in the ministry of the beautiful, have erected this temple, which, though adorned with art, is yet, even in its æsthetic character, simply expressive of your Christian faith. We congratulate you upon its completion. There must be holy associations connected with this place and with these walls. There are memories of the old church now renewed. And there is the beautiful garden of

graves, in whose dark bosom, decked with perennial flowers, sleep the mortal remains of youth and of age—the loved and the lost—over whose eternal slumb ers he shadows from these walls, with the beauty of the beatitudes, bend with the benediction of love. All these combined should render this place to your affections—

"The holiest spot of all the earth."

That this church may be the place, of all others, to which you will always *love* to come; that its pastors may find the hope of their hearts more than realized, and their loving labors abundantly blessed; that he who has ministered to you so long may yet lift up his voice for many, many years within these walls, ere he slumbers, at last, beneath their shade; that the children who, from generation to generation, will here first lisp their prayers, may cherish this place among the sweetest memories of their age; that it may prove a blessing, a beauty, and a delight to all, and be not only "the house of God," but "the gate to heaven"—is the prayer I would offer in behalf of the Churches, through Him who is the Head of the Church, its chief Corner-Stone.

THE WORK OF CHRIST:

A SERMON,

DELIVERED PREVIOUSLY TO THE COMMUNION,

AT THE

DEDICATION OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH,

IN CHARLESTON, S. C.

BY

REV. JOHN H. HEYWOOD,

OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

JOHN xvii. : 4.

"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

THERE is nothing which earth has known to compare with the work of Christ. Monarchs and conquerors have proposed to themselves great and sublime undertakings—the subjugation of the world—the establishment of universal empires—but how do all such projects and undertakings dwindle into insignificance, when compared with his work, whether you regard their purpose or magnitude! Do you look at the purpose? Ordinarily, the controlling purpose in these earthly schemes is of selfish ambition, and as unlike the purpose which animated the heart of Jesus as darkness is unlike light. Do you look at the magnitude? The conquerors have sought to reign for a few years, and over a few millions. Christ came to establish a kingdom which should embrace all hearts, and endure through all ages.

The great philosophers, Kepler, and Newton, and Bacon, proposed to themselves, and accomplished objects, as far transcending the objects proposed by the Cæsars and Alexanders as mind transcends matter; they sought to reign in the realm of mind, and right royally have they reigned; but, great and glorious as is their work, how it dwindles and pales as stars before the sun in presence of the work of him, who came to reveal the laws of the spi-

ritual world, and not only to reveal them, but to open the way of access to that world, and prepare men to enjoy its blessedness forever.

The philanthropists, who, like Howard, have visited the outcast and the prisoner, or like Judson, have gone with apostolic courage to far remote lands, and have labored therein with apostolic perseverance, have proposed to themselves a nobler work—a work more intimately connected with human happiness than the great philosophers, but their work is partial and local when compared with the work of Christ, which knows no limits of time or space; and, moreover, in truth, their work is to be considered as part of his work, as from it they draw their quickening impulse and their vital powers.

The work of Christ—we will not attempt to estimate or measure it! It is immeasurable by human standards and of inestimable value. The more we contemplate it, the more earnestly we endeavor to bring our hearts into accordance with the spirit which pervades it, and from which it sprung, the nobler, the sublimer, the diviner it appears. But, though we cannot do full justice unto it, it becomes us to study it, and to obtain as clear and adequate conceptions as we can of its object, and of the means by which that object is to be accomplished.

What then was the great object proposed? This question can best be answered by one of those brief, yet deeply penetrating, and all-comprehending passages in which the New-Testament abounds, and which so clearly show the uplifting, irradiating, expanding influence of the religion of Jesus over the minds and hearts of his early disciples, taking them, as it did, right up from the dark, wall-confined region of technicalities and formalities to the high table-land of eternal truth, where God's light shines freely, and his spirit is shut out by no barriers. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"—(2 Cor.

v.: 19.) "Reconciling the world unto himself." Here is the great, all-embracing end—reconciliation, and not of one man, or of one set of men, but of all men in the world! The kingdom of God is not that exclusive, aristocratic kingdom which the doctrine of election, as sometimes presented, would represent it to be. It is a kingdom of a privileged class indeed, but that class embraces *all* who accept the divine invitations, and they are given freely and without reserve. "Reconciling the world unto himself." Reconciliation, I repeat—this is the great end.

What are the means by which it is to be accomplished? They are various, though, of course, all-accordant in spirit.

First, Jesus seeks to accomplish the great end by imparting *truth*. One of the sublimest sentences which ever fell from the Saviour's lips, was that in which he declared to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." John xviii.: 37. How grand, how inspiring a view does this language present of the nature and extent of the kingdom which Christ came to establish—a kingdom not over the bodies, but over the minds and souls of men—an intellectual and spiritual kingdom, to be composed of all truth-loving, truth-seeking, truth-acting beings, not only among the Jews, but among all nations and in every clime! How vivid a representation, too, have we of the importance, the essentialness, of truth! The very end, the Saviour declares, for which he was born, the very cause for which he came into the world, was to bear witness to the truth. He knew that spiritual truth was indispensable to the immortal mind—that without it man would grope in twilight dimness or midnight darkness—that without it the path of duty would often be partially or entirely hidden from view—that the standard of character and action would be low, and the prepara-

tion for a higher life poor indeed. Therefore, he bore witness to the truth in life and in death. He taught the truth—he lived the truth. He not only intimated, but clearly revealed, brought out with noon-tide radiance, the highest, the holiest truths—the fatherhood of God, pardon, reconciliation, sanctification, the spirituality of worship, the brotherhood of man, the blessedness of immortality. Such are some of the truths which Jesus taught, and to which he gave his living and dying testimony—truths which before were partially disclosed, or entirely hidden from view, but which now shine out as the sun in midheaven.

When we consider the importance of these truths, and their influence upon life and destiny, how striking, how apposite as well as sublime, are the words in which Jesus speaks of himself as the *light of the world!* Truly he is the light, and heartily grateful should we always be for the mild, clear radiance. You have observed how, when darkness gathers over the earth, the green grass and the variously-tinted flowers lose their beauty, but when the sun sends forth his quickening, illumining rays, their loveliness is restored, they stand forth again in fulness of glory. So, under the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness, every virtue, every affection, every duty, stands forth clear and beautiful. Truly he is the light of the world, and how utterly different is the world under this radiance from what it would be, had that heavenly orb never arisen! And when we consider, also, that he not only revealed the truth, but that, as a *second* means of accomplishing this great work, he marked out the path of duty, and that he walked himself in that path, and left therein his foot-prints of light, and a lingering fragrance as from heaven, we see how apposite and how significant was that other declaration, that he was *the way* as well as the truth. "I am the way and the truth."

To this striking declaration, Jesus adds "and the life."

Life.—This is the *third* means by which the great end

was to be accomplished, and by this I understand that not only the example of Jesus was meant, but something more, something deeper, more vital even than his example, perfect in holiness and beauty as even that was. When Jesus speaks of himself as the life of men, I understand him not only as giving expression to one of the most important truths, but as indicating one of the most distinctive and most vital influences of his religion. Very often is Jesus spoken of in the New Testament as the life of men. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (John x.: 10.) So speaks the Saviour himself, and his disciples speak in a manner according therewith. Very noticeable is the declaration of St. Paul. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. xv.: 45.) You observe the distinction here drawn. The first Adam was made a *living* soul; the last Adam a *quickening*, i. e. *life-giving* spirit.

Now what are we to understand by the *life* which Christ came to give? This question may be variously answered, but the answer which I would give is this:—There is in the world, there has been, from the day when man first yielded to temptation, a fearful power, a dark and evil spirit—*sin*. It is to this that all the real evils of life are owing, for were it not for this, the changes and trials incident to human existence would not present the gloomy aspect which they now wear. It is this which inflames the passions, and causes them to tyrannize over the higher powers; which dulls and stupefies the conscience; which gives birth to the secret faults which, like the rust, that unsuspected eats into and destroys the finest steel, eats into and destroys, as it were, the very texture of the soul; which causes those presumptuous crimes that terrify and astound society, it is this which alienates from God, and destroys the love and the hope of heaven. This may fitly be called the spirit and power of death,

for to moral and spiritual death it leads, and it is this power which Jesus came to remove. It was in view of his destruction of this power that the name of our Lord was given. "Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. i.: 21.) It was in reference to his destruction of this power that the earnest apostle, in his letter to Titus, says that "our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purity unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus ii.: 14.) In the strong language of St. John, "for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He came to enable men to break asunder and cast aside the fetters with which they were bound, and to walk in the freedom of the children of God! And how was this to be effected? Not merely by showing men the evil of sin, and the loveliness of virtue, but by introducing a new power, a power superior to sin and death, the power of life. As I understand it, Jesus is the divinely appointed medium through which this heavenly power is brought into the world. Is not this what we are taught by those profoundly interesting and sublime passages—"As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:"—"Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life?"

Observe this language—"is passed"—not *shall be*. He is already passed from death unto life. And what is meant by *death* here? Not physical death, the death of the body, for the truest, most devoted followers of Jesus have not been exempt from that, but *moral*, *spiritual* death. They are made superior to the power of sin and death through the power of life, and that power is obtained not by formal profession, but through reverent

listening to the word of Jesus, and heart-felt faith in him who sent him. Faith in God and his Son, is the means of enjoying spiritual life, and the truer that faith, the more it fills the heart and pervades the whole being, the greater the power which one has in resisting and overcoming the power of sin and death. Thus do I interpret the Saviour's words—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," i. e. that they might have it not in stinted measure, but freely and without reserve. In accordance with these words is the language of St. Paul, when, in the epistle to the Colossians, he speaks of "Christ our life," (1 Col. iii. : 4) and of St. John, when he says, "he that hath the Son hath life." (1 John v.: 12.) Very vivid is the representation of this truth in another form, when St. Paul says to the Galatians, in language which came all glowing from his heart—language which seems to the superficial reader paradoxical, but which, when read and interpreted by the light of emotions kindred to those under which it was written, not only is consistent with itself, but unfolds a deep truth—"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii.: 20.) This is the response which from their own deep, spiritual experience, the apostles made to the Saviour's declaration—"I am the way, the truth, and the life." They found him to be the life, as well as the truth and the way. Through him they became conscious of a new and great power, in their conflict with sin and moral death—the power of spiritual life. And it was the consciousness of this power which gave such earnestness, such hopefulness to the apostles, and to the early Christians in general.

I have spoken of *the truths* taught by Jesus, which made him the light of the world; of *the example* set by him of devotion to God, and of benevolence to man; of

the *power of life*, which he is the heaven-appointed medium of introducing into the world, to enable men to withstand and triumph over sin and death. These are means towards accomplishing the great end, reconciliation. They are part of his divine work. Do they constitute the whole of it? I think not. There is a class of passages, and a large class, which speak of another, a peculiar, most interesting and important part of his work. I refer to what may be termed the sacrificial passages—such passages as these—"For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi.: 26.) "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Pet. iii.: 18.) "Jesus Christ, the righteous, is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii.: 1 and 2.) "Then said he, lo, I come to do thy will, oh God. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. * * * * For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us; according to that he had said before—'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.' Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." (Heb. x.: 9–18.) These instances are sufficient to indicate the class of passages to which I allude.

How shall we interpret these passages? Few Christians now, I imagine, would assent to the exposition which was prevalent in the church for centuries, that

"Christ was offered to Satan as a ransom, in consideration of which he. should release mankind." Few, at the present day, even of those who hold to the Calvinistic theology, I trust, would be willing to maintain with Calvin, what Dr. Bushnell (God in Christ, 194) calls "the truly horrible doctrine that Christ descended into hell, when crucified, and suffered the pains of the damned for three days.' Few Lutherans, I trust, could read the declaration of Luther—(Christ in Theology, 310) that Christ, under the burden of the imputed sins of mankind, became "the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer that ever was, or could be in all the world," without feeling that the language, though used hyperbolically and extravagantly and not intended to be literally understood, yet in form, not, of course, in intent, is blasphemous in the extreme. Any doctrine or statement, which declares that God at any time regarded Jesus with aversion or looked upon him as guilty, stands in direct antagonism to the explicit assertions of the Bible, as well as to the spirit which pervades the sacred volume, which teaches that God is a being of perfect truth and justice, who looks upon the guilty as guilty, and upon the innocent as innocent, and who always regarded his only-begotten Son with infinite affection; and surely there never was a time when Jesus was more worthy of that affection, than when in obedience to the dictates of heavenly love, he willingly submitted to a cruel, agonizing death. I know that in the garden of Gethsemane he was in terrible anguish, but I know, too, that we are expressly told that an angel appeared from heaven to strengthen him. I know that we have the expression in 2 Cor. v.: 21—"He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin;" and I know, too, that the best commentators interpret the first word *sin* in this connection to denote sin-offering, which, of course, gives a very different aspect to the passage from what it would wear if the

sacred writer were supposed to teach that God regarded Jesus for the time as a sinner. He was an offering *for* sin, *because* of sin; a sacrifice *on account of* sin. A *sacrifice*. How are we to understand that? Was he literally a sacrifice? No, it was no altar on which he was offered, there were no religious rites; it was not with the feeling of holy officers of religion that his murderers put him to death. It was a cross, not an altar, on which he was cruelly slain. Are we to understand though the sacrifice was not literal, yet that the blood of Christ was necessarily shed in order to appease the wrath of God and make him willing to forgive? No! All those expositions which teach that the sacrifice of Jesus was necessary to appease the divine wrath—to make God willing to pardon—as they have really been given up by the great majority of Christians, I believe, ought to be given up by all, for they stand in direct opposition to the declaration of scripture, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." If any thing is clearly taught in the New Testament, it is that the great work of reconciliation or atonement—for the word atonement occurs but once in the New Testament, and is the same word elsewhere translated reconciliation—is a work of love and not of wrath, of love alike on the part of God and of his Son.

How then are we to understand the sacrifice of Christ? What was the import of sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation? They were never understood, I presume, as having power over God to make him willing to forgive. God was always willing to forgive. The Old Testament abounds with passages which exhibit in the most touching and striking manner his placability. The sacrifices appear to have been intended to be expressions, types, of two things—of the evil of sin, and of the readiness of God to pardon the penitent. These are

the two things expressed vividly—never so vividly before—as in letters of living light, by the great sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Son of God. Behold the Saviour in the anguish of Gethsemane, amid the agonies of Calvary. What terrible, what appalling sufferings! And why were these sufferings undergone? For fault, for guilt of his own? No, he was pure, harmless, undefiled, and yet thus terribly he suffered. What an expression have we here of the heinousness, the utter malignity of sin, which could cause such sufferings to such a being!

But consider this sacrifice again. While Jesus is enduring those terrible agonies, does he express any unforgiving, vindictive feelings? No, no, but feelings entirely the reverse. In the very midst of his anguish, when the power of sin has reached the extremest height of malignity, when its utter darkness and blackness are exposed, then, even then, Jesus manifests only the spirit of love and pardon. "Father," he prays, "forgive them, for they know not what they do." What a manifestation of ineffable, inextinguishable love! What heart is not touched, moved, melted! Who can draw near to Jesus and listen to his prayer for the pardon of his murderers? who can look upon the cross and see it radiant with the light which rays out from the heart of Jesus, and reflect that the love which Jesus expressed is but the outshining of the love of God, without feeling that "God hath set him forth to be a propitiation, i. e. a propitiatory or mercy-seat to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus?" Thus it is that through the great sacrifice an expression is made, beyond the power of language, of the heinousness of sin, and of the infinite love of God. Thus the cross becomes the symbol of pardon, the voiceless, yet divinely eloquent teacher of trust in God, and of good will to men. Thus Christ died, the just for the unjust,

that he might bring us to God—and thus, his death becomes not only a deeply interesting, but vitally important part of his work.

But his work ended not at death. He came not only to redeem men from the bondage of sin, and assure them of divine forgiveness, but to abolish death and bring life and immortality to light. Hence, though he yielded to death that he might overcome him that had the power of death, he rested not in the grave, but through the divine power burst the fetters that bound him, by the resurrection placed anew, aud placed forever upon his mission the signet-ring of Jehovah, rolled back the curtain which separates the spiritual from the visible world, that men might see the glorious destiny which awaits the faithful children of God, and then ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God, to the right hand of the Majesty on high, where he ever liveth—our mediator and advocate—to make intercession for us.

I have thus, my friends, given as clearly as I can my views upon the work of Christ—the end of which is reconciliation, the union of earth and heaven, of man and God—a work of which it becomes us to speak with humility, for its full significance no finite mind can comprehend. It is a work of deepest importance, of unutterable grandeur—one worthy of the dignity, and of the heart of the Son of God. Let us dwell upon the work—the spirit which pervaded it—the results which it has achieved and is to achieve—its intimate and eternal connection with the welfare of us all, until we realize in some measure its importance; and then, "I am persuaded," to use the language of St. Paul, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY

EXPOUNDED AND DEFENDED:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

EVENING OF APRIL 2, 1854,

AT THE DEDICATION OF THE

UNITARIAN CHURCH IN CHARLESTON, S. C.,

BY

G. W. BURNAP, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE UNITARIAN CHURCH IN BALTIMORE.

8

DISCOURSE.

JOHN, xvii.: 3.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

THIRTY-FIVE years ago, my predecessor in the pulpit I occupy, came to this city to participate in the ordination of the present senior pastor of this Society. It was to him, I know, an occasion of devout joy and hearty satisfaction, as it consummated the establishment of a church devoted to the dissemination of what he believed to be the truth of the gospel. It is with no less pleasure that I, at the distance of five and thirty years, am present to participate in these dedicatory rites, by which you consecrate this beautiful temple to the worship of the Most High.

To the members of this religious society, the consecration of this edifice to the worship of God, must be an event of the profoundest interest. They must feel that the enterprise now completed is a pledge, that their views of Christianity have in them an element of vitality, strength, and endurance, which is a characteristic of the truth of God.

To the elderly it is suggestive of the past, and carries their minds back, doubtless, to the dawn of Unitarian Christianity in this city, and brings to their recollection the person and character of that saintly scholar and Christian, who first planted the standard of liberal opin-

ions in the heart of this ancient commonwealth.* If they appreciate their position, they must feel that no Protestant society can look back to an origin more honorable and legitimate. As the Reformation in Germany apparently sprang from the studies of a solitary monk, accidentally aroused by the discovery of a copy of the Bible in a library at Erfurt, so did this Church apparently owe its origin to the inquiries of a conscientious and fearless Protestant divine, accidentally turned to the investigation of the scriptural argument for the doctrine of the Trinity. Though a member of the Presbyterian church, he had the penetration to perceive and the honesty to avow the conviction, that the *principles of the Reformation* and *the doctrines of the Reformers* were two different things, and wholly distinct from each other. The principles of the Reformation are eternal and unchangeable, "the sufficiency of the scriptures and the right of private judgment." They command the allegiance of the human mind everywhere and forever. But the doctrines of the Reformers were the conclusions at which they happened to arrive in carrying out those principles. The principles might be just, and must ultimately conduct men to the truth, but the *opinions* at which the wisest men of that period arrived, may have been only an approximation to the truth. It was not to be expected that the Reformers, in the very twilight of modern illumination, and amidst the fierce antagonisms of the times, should have seen the whole of gospel truth. They were justified in drawing up, in distinct propositions, the conclusions to which they had come, as rallying points of impression and defence, but wholly inconsistent when they attempted to stereotype them for the faith of all succeeding ages. As inconsistent are succeeding generations of Protestants in passively receiving those opinions as the rule of their faith. It was in obedience, then, to the principles of the Reformation, that the venerated founder of this religious society

* Rev. Anthony Forster.

repudiated many of the doctrines of the Reformers, as embodied in the Westminster Confession of Faith. His own study of the Bible had convinced him that many of the doctrines to which he had subscribed in his youth, were the dogmas of men and not the teachings of the word of God. As a true Protestant, he was forced to reject them, to come out from a body which had abandoned, in form, the principles of the Reformation, and assert for himself "the sufficiency of the scriptures and the right of private judgment."

But to discover the truth, and to procure it to be extensively recognized in the world, are two totally different things. It is so in science, it is so in politics, but especially is it so in religion. For a time, every thing is against it, the force of prejudice, the bias of interest, and the power of existing institutions. Truth may consider itself fortunate, if it be not stifled and crushed at its first appearance. Wickliff appeared in England, and promulgated the very doctrines which afterwards constituted the glory of the Reformation, more than a century and a half before that great movement took place. Yet both he and his doctrines were overwhelmed by the darkness, the bigotry, and the barbarism of the times, and the world stumbled on in its ignorance another century and a half.

I esteem it a matter of congratulation, that this religious society has been able to stand up and maintain itself in the face of all the influences which, in a free and Protestant country, are still brought to bear on that association of Christians who are bold or honest enough to dissent from the popular creed.

To the young, this day is a day of grateful acknowledgment and pleasing anticipation. It assures them that the worst is past; their fathers have borne the burden and heat of the day. "Other men have labored and they have entered into their labors." The denomination

to which they belong has become a fixed fact, one of the recognized realities of the present age. It has an elaborated and a systematic theology, and a religious literature unsurpassed in learning, in genius, and in eloquence. It is one of the elements of our vast and comprehensive nationality, and is destined to work mightily on the opinions and institutions of coming ages.

But there are some here to-night, doubtless, who are disposed to take a different view of the exercises and influences of this day; who see little else in them than mischief and danger. They conscientiously believe that the gospel, as it is here to be exhibited, is shorn of almost every ray of its original glory; that Christianity is stripped of almost all its distinctive doctrines, and becomes a mere republication of the powerless and inefficient truths of Natural Religion. They believe that the *supreme Deity* of Jesus Christ, an *infinite, vicarious atonement*, and the *special, irresistible influences of the Holy Spirit*, are the sinner's only hope. Take these away, and they imagine that he abides forever under the wrath and curse of God. The denial, too, of the doctrines of *original sin* and *total depravity*, undermines, they apprehend, the conviction of human sinfulness, and discards the very object of the Saviour's mission upon earth. Were these views extensively to prevail, they think that piety would lose its vitality, and preaching its power, the Sabbath would be desecrated, God's altars be forsaken, and public morality subside to a level not far above the condition of heathen lands; that Christian enterprise would be paralyzed, the cause of missions languish, and no more heralds of the cross be found ready to toil and perish on a pagan soil. If I believed this, I could not stand before you to-night. My lips would be sealed, my tongue would be dumb. It is because I believe precisely the opposite of this, that I am come thus far to lift up my voice amidst the solemnities of this occasion. Far be it

from me to utter one word which should diminish the piety and religion there are in the world, or to eclipse the glory of that gospel which was given for the light and salvation of mankind.

It is because we believe that the doctrines Unitarians reject and oppose, are the greatest hinderance of the spiritual power of the gospel in the world, that our exertions to substitute for them a more rational faith are so earnest, so constant, and so persevering. We believe that the doctrines of the trinity, of original sin, of a vicarious atonement, of the imputation of sin and holiness, of human inability and irresistible grace, and the consequent doctrines of election and reprobation, are irreconcilable with reason, are gross violations of the moral sense, and of course set the highest and best principles of our nature, in direct opposition to any system of religion, of which they are represented to make a part. Any thing unreasonable, inconsistent, or contradictory, which is alleged to be found in the scriptures, diminishes the probability that the scriptures contain a revelation from God, and any thing arbitrary, tyrannical, or unjust, attributed to God, tends just so far to destroy a belief in the perfection of his character, and thus to undermine the very foundation of religion itself. We believe that one of the chief reasons of the inefficacy of preaching is, that it wars against the reason and moral sense of mankind quite as much as it does against their vices and passions. It makes reason and conscience its foes and not its allies, and therefore it is weak.

In the first place, then, we argue *that the doctrines we oppose obstruct the power of the gospel, by introducing confusion, contradiction, and inconsistency into public worship.*

In Christian lands, the people come together once a week to worship God. In the sacred scripture, there is only ONE OBJECT of prayer. Not only so, there is not only but one object of prayer, but there is only ONE PERSON

who is the object of prayer, the only living and true God. Throughout the whole Bible, God is worshipped not only as one being, but as *one person*. And this is because God had *revealed* himself to man as one person. To Abraham he said—"Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward." I am thy shield. I, represents a person, and only *one* person. Abraham understood him to mean a person, and only one person, for he prays—"Lord God, what wilt *thou* give me, seeing I go childless?"

When Jehovah reveals himself to Moses, it is with no less distinctive marks of his personal unity. Out of the midst of the burning bush, he proclaims—"I am the God of thy Father Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." That Moses understood the Almighty to reveal himself as subsisting in one person, appears from the expostulation which succeeds—"O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since *thou* hast spoken unto *thy* servant."

Accordingly we have, in the Book of Psalms, the devotions of the ancient people of God, whose opinions were moulded by the Mosaic revelation, extending over a period of more than a thousand years. In the whole of the one hundred and fifty, God is spoken of and addressed as not only one being, but ONE PERSON. There is no intimation of any plurality in him of any kind. The language is everywhere of this description—"O God, *thou* art my God, early will I seek *thee*."

So it is in the New Testament. Our Saviour not only taught the personal unity of God, but he prayed to God as to one person, and taught his followers to do the same. He taught with Moses—"The first of all the commandments is, Jehovah your God, Jehovah is one." He himself prayed to God as one person—"My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me!" He taught his disciples to

do the same. After this manner, therefore, pray ye:—"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be *thy* name, *thy* kingdom come, *thy* will be done."

His apostles, shortly after his ascension "to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God," unite in a prayer, and they address themselves to only one object, although their Master is mentioned in it. "Lord, *thou* art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that in them is. * * * And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto *thy* servants that with all boldness they may speak *thy* word, by stretching forth *thy* hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of *thy* holy servant Jesus."

But, after all this precept and example, let us go into an Episcopalian Church, and what do we hear? We hear prayers directed to *three objects* instead of one. "O God, the Father of heaven, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!" God, the Father of heaven, can be no other God than the God who was worshipped by the apostles—"Lord, thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth and the sea." Then another object is introduced, with another name and another function—"O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." Then there is a third object presented, with still another name and function—"O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners!" Then it may be said that there is a fourth object introduced—"O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." This fourth object must be different from the others, or it would not have been introduced.

Is not such a complicated form of worship as this calculated to produce the greatest confusion in the human mind? If the phraseology of these petitions be literally understood, then, in order to our forgiveness, there must

be a concurrent action between the three persons of the Trinity before we can be forgiven. This at once conflicts with the theory of atonement, which makes a part of the same system of religion. The Son has made an atonement to the Father for the sins of the world, but no atonement has been made to the Son. No atonement has been made to the Holy Ghost, and so although the Father may forgive sin, the Son and the Holy Ghost cannot, and they must remain forever unreconciled.

Then let the mind dwell for a moment on the ideas which are brought together by the expression, "God the Son." A being, to be God, must be *underived*, *self-existent*, and *without beginning*. A being, who is a Son, must be *derived*, *dependent*, and *have had a beginning*. The very phrase then, "God the Son," is a self-contradiction. It cannot represent a real being, or any real existence in the universe. The ideas contained in it are mutually destructive of each other.

Let the worshipper reflect, moreover, that there is no such being revealed or named in the scriptures, as "God the Son;" no such juxtaposition of words in the Bible. The nearest approach to it is in the epithet, "Son of God," which was applied to Jesus of Nazareth, and was, in the time of the apostles, merely a synonym for Christ or Messiah.

As the Litany proceeds, the mind of the worshipper is still further confounded by finding that one of these objects of adoration has *a human nature*, and is worshipped as having been *conceived*, and *born*, and *circumcised;* as having *died* and *been buried*—"By the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation; by thine agony and bloody sweat." How can the human mind, which has any just conceptions of the nature of the Deity, associate such ideas as these with the being and attributes of

God? A being infinite, eternal, unchangeable, pervading all space, without parts or passions, a pure spirit, incapable of suffering or death?

If the worshipper chance to enter a Presbyterian Church, he will listen to no formal attempt to pray to a Trinity. Without a written form, such an attempt would be exceedingly difficult of success. It would be next to impossible not to stumble in it; for language has its laws as well as thought. There is no way in which an address can be made without the use of *personal pronouns*. A person is an indivisible unit. A person cannot be divided even in thought. To divide a person, instantly destroys the very conception of personality. The converse is equally true; you cannot make three persons coalesce into one person, even in thought. That the thing is so, is shown by the fact, that when we have combined the three persons into the anomalous word Trinity, we spontaneously refer to it by the pronoun *it* and not by *he*. But *the whole Deity is a person*, and is so represented by the word God. It is so throughout the scriptures. In using the pronouns *thee* and *thou*, the minister who leads the devotions of the congregation we have just supposed, has in his mind the whole Deity. He does not mean to pray to a *part* of the Deity, nor to one person of the Deity. If he means to pray to one person of a Trinity, he is equally bound to address the three successively, and make precisely the same petitions to each, as we have already seen is done in the Episcopal service.

But, in neglect of his creed, in forgetfulness of his theology, he prays to God as *one* person. He prays precisely like a Unitarian. He approaches God in the name of Christ, as the Mediator. He prays to God to send the Holy Spirit, which represents it to be precisely what it is, an influence and not a person. But sometimes he addresses a prayer to Christ. He implores him to interfere in behalf of the worshipper. In doing so, however, he vio-

lates not only the first principles of religion, but the command of Christ himself. The only proper object of prayer, is "the Former of our bodies and the Father of our spirits"—he who controls the physical and moral universe. Christ sustains none of these relations. He is not our God, but our Intercessor with God. He himself says—"*I will pray the Father*, and he shall send you another Comforter." It is wholly irrational to pray to one who is in turn to pray for us to another.

Besides, Jesus, apparently apprehending that his followers, after his exaltation to heaven, would be tempted to pray to him, strictly forbade it. "In that day," said he, "ye shall ask *me* nothing: Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask *the Father in my name*, he will give it you."

So overwhelming is the evidence of the unity of God, so universal in the Bible is the worship of God in one person, and so impossible is it by the laws of thought and the structure of language, to maintain the worship of a Trinity of persons in God, that the very doctrine of the Trinity itself would soon die out, were there not especial pains taken to keep it alive.

If the casual worshipper in almost any popular church takes up the Hymn Book, he will find that the deficiency of the prayers is attempted to be supplied in the Psalmody. The doctrine of the Trinity, incapable of being woven into the prayers, or incorporated into the ordinary hymns, is supplied in a sort of appendix at the end; is versified in different metres, so as to be fitted on to the hymns which are sung in ordinary devotion, in the form of a doxology.

There is *another* reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in an appendix to the Hymn Book, besides the intrinsic difficulty of incorporating the worship of three persons as God into devotional poetry. The hymns of the modern Protestant churches were at first transla-

tions, or metrical versions of the psalms. The psalms are the devotional poetry of the Jewish nation, based upon the theology of Moses; but, in the whole hundred and fifty, there is not a single allusion to the doctrine of the Trinity. It does not appear that any one of the writers ever entertained such an idea. God is everywhere addressed as *one* person and *only* one. In any just and honest translation of the psalms, *no* worship of a Trinity could be expressed. The doctrine had not then come into existence. In fact, the last three psalms are themselves doxologies, but they are addressed to Jehovah as *one* God, in *one* person. "Praise ye Jehovah, for *his* name alone is excellent, *his* glory is above the earth and heaven." No doxology to a Trinity could be inserted into the psalms without the most palpable interpolation. Hence, such doxologies are placed at the end, and by themselves, and when they are sung as appendages to the psalms, they present the most manifest inconsistency.

Our second proposition is, that the doctrines we oppose obstruct the power of the gospel, *by introducing confusion, inconsistency, and contradiction into the theology of the New Testament.*

Every church and every religious system rest on the basis of a distinctive theology. It was so with the Catholic church at the commencement of the Reformation. The beginning of that great movement was the nailing, by Luther, of ninety-five theological propositions to the door of the church in Wittemberg. So it is with Protestant churches at the present day. Each has its system of theology, carefully elaborated and framed together. The Episcopal church has her Articles and Catechism; the Presbyterian church has her Confession of Faith and Catechisms.*

* These two communions are referred to here and elsewhere throughout the discourse, not from any invidious distinction, but because their manuals of faith are substantially adopted by most of the Protestant denominations.

The Protestant, in his controversy with the Catholic, appealed to the senses. He contended that the doctrine of transubstantiation was contradicted by three of the senses—by the sight, the touch, and the taste. The Catholic took refuge in *mystery*. He said it was a mystery, and must be believed, notwithstanding its contradiction by the senses. The Protestant answers, that the senses are constituted by God as the most indubitable evidence of any truth, and he who disbelieves his senses, violates a primary law of his intellectual nature.

In the same manner, the Unitarian examines the doctrine of the Trinity, as stated and maintained in most Protestant churches, by the laws of reason and logic, and with a like result. He finds that it will not bear the test. Reason is that faculty of the mind by which we distinguish truth from falsehood, and logic is the verbal process by which it is done.

Let us take, for instance, the fourth, fifth, and sixth questions of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, a manual of theology, which is recognized and established by the Presbyterian church of the United States. It is printed by hundreds of thousands, and distributed broad-cast over the land. It is taught to millions of children before the faculty of reason is sufficiently developed to compare its teachings with the Bible, or with the first principles of intuitive reason.

The three questions when analyzed are found, as it appears to me, to contain one of the most marvellous fallacies ever imposed upon the human mind. It is so adroitly constructed, that it will be necessary for you to pay the closest attention, while I endeavor to detect and lay it open. The object of it is to introduce three persons into the idea of one God, without shocking the reason, or confounding the first principles of arithmetic.

It is necessary to premise, that all things in the universe may be divided into two classes or categories, *persons* and

things. A person is distinguished from a thing by the attributes that a person is capable of being addressed, and incapable of being divided. A person is *an intelligence, a consciousness, an indivisible unit.* Division destroys the very idea of personality.

A thing is distinguished from a person by the *opposite* attributes, that it is incapable of being addressed, and capable of being divided.

Keeping these principles in view, we proceed to examine the three questions. The first is, "What is God?" And the answer is a very proper one. "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." The next question is equally sensible, and equally well answered. "Are there more Gods than one? There is but one only living and true God." In these two questions with their answers, two great truths are clearly stated and acknowledged. First, that there is but one God; and, secondly, that that one God is *a person,* for he is said to be unchangeable in *his* being. The pronoun *his,* clearly represents the whole Deity as not only one God, but *a person,* and *one person.*

The fallacy alluded to is contained in the next question—"How many persons are there in the Godhead?" The fallacy consists in the change of terms from "*God*" into "*Godhead.*" By this substitution, *a person* is adroitly, as far as expression goes, transformed into *a thing,* and thus the possibility of *division* is introduced. Reject the substitution, and restore the word *God,* with which the discussion commenced, and the question becomes—"How many persons are there in God?" And recollecting that God was defined to be a person by the use of the pronoun *his,* the question instantly becomes, if our logic be correct, absurd—How many persons are there in GOD?—who is himself a person, and a person in its own nature indivisible; it cannot be divided even in thought.

But by an ingenious substitution of terms, by changing *God* into *Godhead*, a person, in thought or imagination, is changed into a thing, and the way is prepared to introduce division into the divine nature, without a shock to that reason which the Almighty has placed as a sentinel at the entrance of the human mind, to determine what is true and what is false, what is to be admitted and what is to be kept out. The triumph of this stupendous sophism is accomplished over the understanding; the illusion is completed in open day by this legerdemain of words, when the answer is given—"There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

This triune conception of God being introduced into the thought at an early age, makes the idea of the Deity one of the most perplexed and confused that enters the human mind. No better definition of God can be given than the answer to the first question we quoted—"What is God? God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." As long as we keep to this definition, our conception of God is clear, distinct, and unembarrassed. He is one spirit, one mind, one intelligence, one consciousness, one will, one being, who fills immensity and inhabits eternity. He is the being who is revealed to us in the scriptures as "the only living and true God," and is so worshipped throughout the whole history of divine revelation.

But the moment you introduce three persons into his essence, all becomes to us darkness and confusion, inconsistency and contradiction. The functions of Deity must be divided in order to give each one of the persons something to do. And then these persons must sustain certain relations to each other. But how can this be, if, after all, God is a spirit, that is, *one* spirit, and there is and can be but one God?

Accordingly, this division of the Deity into persons, has

given rise to the most wonderful historical mythology that has ever been invented by the human mind. In the scriptures we are told that, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"—"He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast." But the upholders of the doctrine of the Trinity tell us, that the first person of the Trinity created the world through the agency of the second; the Father created the world through the instrumentality of the Son.

The persons of the Trinity were so distinct, according to this theory, that they held *conferences* together, and made covenants with each other in the ages of eternity, long before the creation of the world. For although one of the persons is Son to the other, he is as ancient as his Father. It was foreseen before the creation of man, that he would fall by sinning against God; yet one of these persons, though sinned against just as much as the others, undertakes to make an atonement to one of the others, leaving the third unatoned and unreconciled.

In order to fulfil this covenant, in process of time, the second person of the Trinity descends to the earth, and becomes incarnate in the body of an unborn infant, and by an ineffable combination with the soul of this infant, becomes one person with it.

By this combination a being is constituted more wonderful and anomalous than even the Trinity itself, a being at the same time divine and human, God and man; knows all things, and yet confesses ignorance; is almighty, and yet can do nothing of himself; prays, and yet possesses all things; is incapable of suffering, and yet, as death approaches, falls down on the ground in an agony; and when the moment comes for the second person of the Trinity to make atonement to the first, the human part confesses the absence of the divine, by exclaiming—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!"

That I may not be accused of exaggeration or mis-

statement, I shall here quote entire the second of the articles which constitute a formal declaration of the theology of the Episcopal Church of the United States.

"The Son, which is the word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, of her substance, so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us; and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

Do not such statements as this introduce confusion, inconsistency, and contradiction into the theology of the New Testament?

But the mind, being thus impressed with the doctrine of the Trinity as a fact, is prepared to view the scriptures forever afterwards through the medium of this hypothesis, to find proofs of it when they do not exist, and to overlook the plain and palpable evidence that everywhere abounds, of the personal, numerical, and absolute unity of God.

I proceed to notice a few instances of this. The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians closes with the benediction—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." This is universally regarded as one of the strongest proof-texts of the Trinity. Innumerable eyes have read in it a formal statement that the Deity subsists in three persons, and many have declared that if this passage could be explained in consistency with the numerical and personal unity of the Divine Being, they would cease to be believers in a triune God. And yet that impression is an illusion, produced by a fore-gone conclusion, that the doctrine is true.

This is, in fact, one of the strongest proof-texts of the personal unity of God, and a most conclusive refutation of the Trinity. Look at it carefully, and you will perceive that what at first appears to be a separate person of this Trinity is God, the *whole* Deity, the second clause being, "and the love of God." God is not the distinctive name of the first person of the Trinity, but "the Father." Had the expression been, "and the love of the Father," it might have been more plausibly alleged as an argument for the Trinity; but being "and the love of God," and the word God comprehending and exhausting the whole divine essence, and being connected with the Lord Jesus Christ by the particle *and*, Jesus Christ is not only not comprehended in the divine essence, but absolutely excluded from it. So that this formula, which has been considered the strongest argument for the doctrine of the Trinity, is found, when analyzed, to be one of the strongest arguments against it.

The case is the same with the form of salutation, which Paul uses at the commencement of his epistles—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Most readers of the Bible, who read it with the bias of the Trinitarian hypothesis, imagine that they have here a salutation from two out of three of the persons of the Trinity. They draw this conclusion from the form of expression, and from the presupposed fact. "God the Father," they imagine, is the peculiar designation of the first person of the Trinity, and "the Lord Jesus Christ" the designation of the second; and thus, they suppose, blessings are invoked from each.

But let a person whose attention has been called to the subject, go over Paul's Epistles and examine the structure of each of them in relation to this matter, and he will find that the form of expression "from God *the* Father," occurs in but three of them, while in the other ten

the form of the salutation is, "Grace unto you, and peace, from God *our* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now God *our* Father is an appellation, not of a person of a Trinity, but of the whole Deity, without any distinction of persons. This is the appellation by which we are directed to address God in our prayer, in that formula of devotion which has been left to us by our Saviour. It commences, "Our Father, which art in heaven." We cannot suppose that our Saviour, who could not have been unacquainted with the facts, would have taught us to address but one person of a Trinity, if there really were three, each and all equally possessing all divine attributes, and equally demanding worship from man.

But the Apostle Paul uses the phrases "God *our* Father" and "God *the* Father," as equivalent to and interchangeable with each other. For in ten instances he writes—"Grace unto you, and peace, from God *our* Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" and, in three instances—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God *the* Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." If "God *our* Father" and "God *the* Father" are synonymous, "God *the* Father" includes the whole Deity, and the acceptation of the term which makes it the designation of a person of a Trinity, is a total misapprehension, as is likewise its correspondent phrase, "God the Son." The very phrase then, "Grace, mercy and peace, from God *the* Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ," not only does not include Christ within the Deity, but expressly shuts him out of it.

Is it asked—"If Christ be not God, why is he associated with God in this form of salutation? It may be answered that Paul had never known Jesus in the flesh, but only as a disembodied, glorified spirit. His acquaintance with him commenced on the way to Damascus, not as God, but as Jesus, whom God had caused and enabled to appear to him, with a manifestation of miraculous power.

When Paul inquired who he was, he answered not, I am God, but "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." The power by which all this was done, did not inhere in Jesus, for Paul expressly says, in relating this transaction, that the explanatory message he received from Ananias was this:—"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just one, and learn the voice of his mouth."

But though not God, the delegated agency of Jesus was manifest in the first planting of his church. And hence the form of salutation adopted by Paul to the churches—"Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ."

The conceptions of the primitive church of the position occupied by Jesus, and the relations sustained by him after his exaltation to heaven, are clearly exhibited in the Book of Revelation. The doctrinal aspects of this book are usually thought to be Trinitarian, but nothing can be farther from the fact. The first verse, the title of the book, settles this question—"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him." This is a denial in terms of any participation of Jesus in the Deity.

But the mind, preoccupied by the hypothesis of the Trinity, reads such passages a thousand times over without perceiving how plainly they teach the personal unity of God.

I now come to my third proposition, which is that *the theology we oppose undermines religion*, as we cannot but feel persuaded, *by attributing to God such acts of moral government as render it impossible for man to regard God as either just or benevolent.* Piety is founded on a conviction of the divine perfections. We are commanded to *love* God with all our hearts. But this command supposes that God is *worthy* of our love. We are commanded o exercise *repentance* towards God. But that repentance

supposes that God has been just in his dealings towards us. We *cannot* repent of that for which we are sure we were not to blame.

Sin is the trangression of a just and equitable law; a failure to comply with requisitions proportioned to our powers of performance. Repentance is regret for having chosen evil, when good was equally in our power. It arises from the conviction that we are weighed in an even balance, and that every human being has a fair protection.

But the system which we oppose expressly declares, that the first pair of our race only were created "with freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well pleasing to God." This is the very power, which, according to those ideas of justice, that God has implanted within us, is necessary to our just responsibility. But their posterity, it would seem, have no such freedom. For the same system goes on to say—"Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost *all* ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." Nothing can be more certain in the whole compass of thought, than that the loss of freedom involves an exemption from just responsibility to the same extent. Now nothing can be conceived of as more unjust than to take away the freedom and continue the responsibility. But this is the very thing which God is represented as having done to mankind. Not only so, they suffer a double punishment, without having committed any offence. They suffer for Adam's sin, which they did not commit, and then suffer for their own sins, which, through his fault, they cannot avoid committing. Such a government as this is so wholly inconsistent with our natural sentiments of justice and equity, that it fixes the character of the being to whom it is attributed, in palpable, undeniable injustice. Whatever men may say in their creeds, or elaborate in their doxologies, the government of God must appear a

stupendous tyranny. The being who exercises it cannot be regarded with any other sentiments than dread and abhorrence.

Most especially will this be the case, when it is, moreover, considered that our *consciousness* is not adjusted to the real state of things. No such deterioration has been notified to our consciousness, that we "have lost all ability of will to any thing that is spiritually good." Our consciences hold us responsible for every thing we do that is wrong, and make us unhappy by their reproaches, just as if we were in the condition in which Adam was created, with the power to will and to do that which is right. Our consciousness does not correspond to our actual condition, as represented by this doctrine, and therein consists an enormous injustice.

Our consciousness is to us the revelation of God of the real state of things as to our moral constitution. We are compelled to believe that to be fact which that consciousness assures us is true. If our moral nature has suffered a paralysis, then we ought to bear about with us the certain knowledge that we are impotent in this respect, and no longer to be made unhappy by doing wrong, when we are incapable of doing any thing else.

The mode in which a part of mankind are said to be rescued from this condition, is as inconsistent with justice as the way in which they all got into it. It is by *arbitrary election*. Those who are to obtain salvation, are chosen "without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions, moving God to the choice."

Such positive acts and arrangements as these, fix and determine our views of the divine character. They are irreconcilable with our natural and spontaneous convictions of justice, and render it a moral impossibility for us sincerely to ascribe moral perfection to God. All sincere worship is at an end. And if such views are fastened on

the Bible, the Bible itself will lose the confidence and respect of the world, and the flood-gates will be opened to universal skepticism and unbelief. It is because we believe that the Bible does not contain these doctrines that it still retains our confidence, our veneration and allegiance. We believe that it is in harmony with nature, with reason, and with the natural conscience of men, and therefore it is that we make strenuous efforts to disabuse the world of the impressions which are gone abroad concerning it.

We believe that it teaches the numerical and personal UNITY of God, that he is *one* mind, *one* intelligence, *one* will—"the blessed and only potentate, who alone hath immortality, whom no man hath seen or can see." We believe in his moral perfections, in short, in his paternal character, that he is not only the Creator, but the Father of his rational offspring. We believe that "God is love," and, therefore, that he is not only just, but compassionate and merciful. We believe that his character is, in the largest sense, paternal. It is the part of a Father to provide for the highest welfare of his children. The highest welfare of man is his spiritual welfare. In this respect, we believe that God has cared impartially for the spiritual welfare of every rational and immortal soul. We believe that He has not left himself without witness to any individual or nation of the human species, and that his universal revelation is the most important revelation that he has made.

We believe that the introduction to the Gospel of John, is a true representation of the various revelations which God has made of himself. The following we regard to be its substantial import:—The Word that he has spoken, or the revelation that he has made, was, first, in the work of Creation, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy," when he "made every thing that was made, and without him was nothing

made that was made." In the second place, in the soul of man, its high faculties, and "in that inspiration which giveth every man understanding," and "lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This universal light is a universal revelation, and is the most important revelation of all. It is written on the mind and heart of every human being. It cometh with him into the world, lighteth his path through his whole pilgrimage, and shineth even into that world which is beyond the grave. It places every human being in a state of trial and under a religious discipline, and puts it in the power of all by "fearing God and working righteousness to be accepted with him."

He revealed himself more especially to the Jewish nation through Moses and the prophets; but with that light there came a proportionally greater responsibility. The scriptures of the Old Testament embody a knowledge of divine things, for which we search the records of heathen antiquity in vain. The saints of the old dispensation, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and Isaiah, arrived at a measure of knowledge, refinement, and sanctity, which left the good men of pagan lands far behind.

But in Jesus Christ this divine light, which had but dimly glimmered before, burst forth in full orbed splendour. In him the Word became incarnate. "In him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The dim twilight which had reigned before, brightened, when the Sun of Righteousness arose, into perfect day. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." So far as the knowledge of divine things is concerned, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than the sages of the Mosaic dispensation. Passing over then as unessential, all dogmatism concerning the *person* of Christ, we cling to the great fact that in him *the Word became incarnate;* in him divine revelation became full and complete, "and of his fulness have we all received,

and grace for grace." It was that very fulness which constituted the Christian era to be the great epoch of the ages. To it the ages before looked forward, to it the ages since have looked back, as the turning point of human destiny. It *was* so, in respect to the fact, that in his gospel the essential truths of religion were disengaged from the national and ritual relations in which they before existed, and by a new and simpler ritual are made accessible to all mankind;—in the fact, that in the words which were spoken by Christ, we have the "spirit and life" of a universal religion, addressing itself to the universal soul of man, to be confined by no boundaries of time or space, to live and reign forever.

But, above all, do we think that the power of the gospel resides in the simple historic fact of *the resurrection of Jesus*, which is the keystone of the arch of Christian faith. By this fact, in oriental phraseology, he was raised "to the right hand of God," that is, was clothed with the authority of God, the divine sanction is placed upon all that he had taught in the name of God.

The gospel, then, from the beginning, was armed with a double power, that of *moral conviction*, arising from its identity with the universal reason, and that of *supernatural attestation*. It anticipates and supersedes all philosophy, and restrains the wildness of human speculation. It carries with it the divine signature, and seals the truth itself with the authority of God. It is, therefore, indestructible and eternal. It must spread and grow, till it becomes the religion of the world.

By the resurrection of Jesus, our natural expectations of immortality are confirmed, the dim and distant horizon, which divides time from eternity, is lifted up and dissolved, and "life and immortality" are brought near and made a vitalizing, present reality. The anticipation of retribution, which is inseparable from the moral nature of man; which travels with him in all his wanderings;

abides with him in the loneliness of the wilderness; pervades his thought in the silence of midnight, and inhabits his consciousness in the darkness of a dungeon, becomes an all-controlling fact. But the gospel, as we understand it, does not clothe this thought with the partial and appalling associations of crime, conviction, and punishment, which make up the whole idea of human tribunals—this is God's strange work—but, likewise, and rather, of approbation, of welcome, of glory, and of reward. The wicked must suffer the natural consequences of a sinful life, but at the great day when heaven and earth shall pass away, "the book of life" is to be opened—and no right action; no benevolent deed; no cup of cold water ministered to parched and fainting lips; no soothing word or compassionate emotion, which may be recorded of one of the humblest or most unworthy of God's children, shall lose its reward.

CONCLUDING

ADDRESS TO THE CONGREGATION.

BY

REV. C. J. BOWEN,

OF NEW-BEDFORD, MASS.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

My Christian Friends:—It is by your kindness and indulgence that I am here to-day, to participate in these solemn and interesting services of consecration. Though distance had separated us, my heart, my sympathies, and my thoughts, would have been with you at this hour.

We have *often* met together for purposes of worship and communion, and have held sweet and sacred intercourse with each other in times that are past—and our mutual prayers, and praises, and meditations, our common faith and unity of purpose, have already brought us into the relation of sympathy and fellowship.

Therefore, I feel that I have an appropriate place in these services, and it is meet that my joys, congratulations, and interest should mingle with yours, at this season of your prosperity and happiness, when a new place for Christian worship and holy influences opens its doors to receive and welcome you to its services, and to offer you a religious home, as disciples of the blessed Jesus!

But, my friends, not only do my thoughts recur to our pleasant *experiences* in the past, but they *will* linger around the former *place* of our meeting together. That *old* church, in all its plainness and simplicity, and even in its decay, is hallowed to my mind by the sweetest and most sacred associations—by experiences, whose results have entered deeply into life, and have tended to make it holy and happy. That old church—where it was my privilege and pleasure *first* to *preach*—at whose altar we

stood, and from full hearts uttered the vows of constancy and love through life, and received a Heavenly Father's blessing at the hand of a loved earthly father—that old church occupies a hallowed place in my memory!

And if it be so with me, how infinitely sacred must it be to most of you in recollection, who have worshipped there through many years; you, who recall the hours when you felt the first fresh pulses of spiritual experience and peace; you, who for the first time, perhaps, breathed the silent prayer there, and formed the holy and religious purpose, and received the seed of the word into your heart, and approached the sacred table of communion, and offered your little child to God; you, who can garner up in your memories recollections which remain unknown, save to God and your own hearts, and which bring back varied emotions of joy and sorrow; you, who also stood at this altar of promise and consecration—and who have, besides, come here with the silent and spiritless bodies of the loved and the departed, over which you have wept bitterly and prayed fervently, and then have followed them in sadness, but in faith and trust, through yonder door, to drop the tear of sorrow and love upon their quiet and beautiful resting places. To you who have known these things, my friends, that old church must be a sacred place, indeed, in your hearts.

But "old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new!" That which met the wants, the taste, and the necessities of the past, fails to satisfy your present desires and requirements; and, loyal to your faith, and impelled by a commendable zeal, and earnestness, and liberality, which sought the aid of a more *genial* and *inspiring* place for religious devotion, you have erected this beautiful house of prayer, as an outward expression of your *faith* in God the Father, and in Jesus the Saviour, and in the belief that here your hearts will often experience the renewing visits of the Holy Spirit.

If the *outward* beauty, freshness, and strength of this temple be only symbolical of greater invigoration, and of deeper spiritual life in your church, then you will be worthy of it; if you shall bring here only humble, penitent, and waiting minds, with the aspiration to be more and more the disciples of Jesus, it will be true of you *inwardly* as well as *outwardly*, that all things have become *new*.

You have summoned us, who are with you to-day, from our distant spheres of labor, since you naturally desire, at this time, the cordial and unreserved sympathy of those who are of the same household of faith. Isolated, as you are, from the great body of Unitarian Christians, you cannot habitually enjoy that free intercourse, and those exchanges of counsel and sympathy, which the Unitarian Clergy of New-England share with one another.

We hardly expect to stand upon a common platform of faith with all denominations of Christians—we cannot reasonably suppose that all should interpret the scriptures as we do—when we remember the powerful and almost irresistible influences of *early education*, and the natural bias of the human mind towards those doctrines and forms to which it has been accustomed.

But we do look for, and pray for, a fairer and more intelligent judgment of the faith which is precious to us as coming from the lips of Jesus—we *do* look for more abundant and hearty fellowship and love among Christian disciples—for, without this, we are persuaded that religion is but a *form*. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have *love* one to another." Upon this condition we are willing to live in peace and fellowship with all, and we honor and respect every man who holds his faith in sincerity and conscientiously, though he differ in sentiment from us.

Let this be the common and hearty *desire* of the Chris-

tian church, and we may, in our day, realize the return of that spirit of sympathy which was manifested among the early Christians, when the first disciples of Jesus were known and distinguished from their opponents by the close and beautiful affection which existed among them—when Tertullian wrote, in his Defence of Christianity, that even the heathen used to say of the Christians—"Behold, how they love one another, and are ready to die for one another"—when the Emperor Julian, who was an inflexible enemy of Christianity, still recommended its disciples to his pagan subjects as models of goodness and purity, and as those who fulfilled the injunction of St. Paul—"Be kindly affectioned to one another in *brotherly love;*" and when the author of the Acts of the Apostles wrote—"And the multitude of them that *believed* were of one heart and of *one* soul."

But the spirit of Christian *love* which animated and united the band of early disciples, seems to have been ignored in these latter days; and it can scarcely be said now of the various sects of christendom—"Behold how they love another;" but, on the contrary, the humiliating fact must be confessed, that the spirit of uncharitableness and exclusiveness has usurped that of love and fellowship.

It is strange that it should be so, when all are avowedly engaged in the work of bringing about the reign of peace and good will among men—and when, too, the differences in faith and form are so often trivial and unessential. Let not this result be laid at the door of Christianity, but rather let the short-sightedness and the folly of men account for the fact.

And still, in our day, cheering signs of liberality and progress are to be acknowledged, for the earnest and independent men, of all denominations, are rising superior to the dominion of sect, and are generously lending their influence, their voices and their pens, to advance all libe-

ral and Christian endeavors—they are beginning to plead for the realization of *vital* religion—for the *actual* establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom—and how much have we to hope, from these vigorous efforts of men, differing in points of religious belief, but firmly united against the *evil* of the world!

Who shall not hail with joy the time, when the Christian pulpit shall cease to raise its voice *only* against the sins of ancient days, and the idolatries of the Jewish people, and the corruptions of lost Sodom and Gomorrah; when it shall cease to beat the air in unprofitable discussions and in condemnation of distant errors; when it shall cease to spend its voice in *defending* the dead and useless dogmas of the church, and shall become a *living* voice of power and influence, speaking in earnest and *persuasive* tones against the vanities, the idolatries, and the excesses of to-day! God speed that good time!

The true idea of the Christian church and congregation, is that of a body of people coming together for the simple purpose of worship and instruction; and, *more than that*, a body of people united in sympathy and harmony, for the objects of Christian and benevolent *action*;—the church *should* be an *actual* and a *felt* influence in the community *for good*, and the bond of Christian *love* should unite all its members together. Thus will it be a powerful and an effective element in society against *sin*—thus will it be recognized as the *living* Church of Christ.

But, my friends, if others deny you their sympathy and co-operation—if you must stand alone, and they continue to regard you and your efforts with coldness and reserve, heed it not, nor allow yourselves to be drawn into the same current of feeling.

Be it your endeavor to overcome evil with good, in all things. Be it your endeavor to *prove* to all men by your sincere and simple worship—by your daily conversation, your deeds of charity, and your holy living, that *you* have

attained a faith, which *shows* itself in words and works of love, and in the serene composure of your lives. Whatever *others* may think or say, it is enough for you to be persuaded, in your own minds, that you are seeking after the truth as it is in Jesus; and that you rest your faith, and hopes, and lives, upon the immovable rock of the Gospel of Christ!

Christian friends: We offer you our congratulations for this crowning result of your labors and liberality. This temple is a most worthy offering to God the Father and to Jesus the Saviour; and, as you come up here upon these earthly Sabbath days, bearing upon your hearts, before God, the burdens, the sorrows, and the experiences of the passing weeks, may you find that peace and spiritual succour which this place is designed to afford.

May the pastor and the people, who have been united for so many years in peace and love—who have walked together in the green pastures, and by the still waters of life—overtaken, at times, by the deepening shades of sorrow and disappointment too; who have been with each other in scenes of social joy, and in hours of sacred confidence and communion; who have known each other *so well* in sickness and in health, and have stood together at so many bridals and at so many graves; may you *both* be richly blessed in this hour of your *mutual* satisfaction and congratulation, and with renewed life and increasing *love*, may you now enter anew upon other years of labor and happiness; and to the Holy Father be the prayer, for your beloved pastor and his co-labourer our brother, and for you the people of their mutual charge.

"May you, by each other led,
Grow to *one* in Christ your head;
And, at last, together be,
Ripe for Heaven, and meet for Thee!"

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